NATION

Delhi could become a desert: HC on rising temp

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Adani reclaims Asia's richest person title

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

French Open: Djokovic beats Musetti in five sets

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 3 JUNE 2024 | MONDAY | BENGALURU | 25 DHUL-QIDAH, 1445 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 132 | Pages: 8

WE ARE HIRING

SUB-EDITOR
WEB EDITOR
REPORTER

Journalism degree preferred but not essential

Applicants with maximum 2 years of experience preferred. Freshers are encouraged to apply

SEND YOUR CV TO

hrsalarnews@gmail.com
anushreeirwin@gmail.com

BJP secures 3rd term in Arunachal

Wins 46 seats in the 60-member Assembly

ITANAGAR, 2 JUNE

BJP on Sunday returned to power in Arunachal Pradesh for the third time in a row, winning 46 seats in the 60-member Assembly, and bagging four more seats compared to its 2019 tally.

In sweeping the Assembly elections, the counting of which was held during the day, BJP decimated Opposition parties, especially the Congress which was relegated to the fifth position with only one seat after NPP (5), NCP (3) and PPA (2). Three seats went to Independent candidates.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu asserted that the momentum of what happened in the 'Land of the rising sun', a sobriquet for Arunachal Pradesh, will spread to other parts of the country on 4 June when votes for Lok Sabha elections will be counted. "This is a historic occasion for the BJP and entire Arunachal Pradesh. The people of Arunachal Pradesh have declared that they want BJP to stay in power for the next five years. This time, the mandate is more than what we got in 2019. In 2019 Assembly polls, BJP won 41 seats, while we have won 46 seats this time," Khandu told PTI Video.

BJP decimated Opposition parties, especially Congress **PHOTO: PTI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the people of Arunachal Pradesh for the landslide win. "Thank you, Arunachal Pradesh! The people of this wonderful state have given an unequivocal mandate to politics of development. My gratitude to them for reposing their faith in @BJP4Arunachalyet again. Our Party will keep working with even greater vigour for the state's growth," Modi said on X. *—PTI*

SKM storms back to power in Sikkim

The party wins 31 of 32 seats; BJP bags none

GANGTOK, 2 JUNE

The Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) on Sunday returned to power in the Himalayan state for the second consecutive term by a landslide victory, winning 31 seats in the 32-member Assembly.

The Opposition Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), which ruled the state for 25 years in a row till 2019, could manage only one seat, though its president Pawan Kumar Chamling lost in the two constituencies he contested.

SKM President and Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, however, won from two seats, and the party bagged 58.38 per cent of the votes polled. The SKM had won 17 seats in the 2019 assembly polls. Elections to the Assembly were held simultaneously with the first phase of Lok Sabha polls on 19 April.

SKM supporters celebrate after the party wins in state Assembly elections, in Gangtok on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed Tamang and the SKM for the victory. "Congratulations to SKM and CM @PSTamangGolay for their victory in the Sikkim Assembly Elections 2024. I look forward to working with the State Government to further the progress of Sikkim in the coming times," Modi said on X. Responding to the Prime Minister's post, Tamang thanked him. "We are committed to continuing our efforts towards the development and prosperity of Sikkim. We look forward to collaborating with you to achieve our shared goals for the betterment of our state. "Your unwavering support has been a driving force for us, and we look forward to your continued guidance and blessings," Tamang said.—*PTI*

After polls, NHAI hikes highway tolls by 5%

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

Motorists using expressways will have to shell out more from Monday as National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has decided to hike tolls across the country by an average of 5 per cent. The annual revision of highway user fee, which is expected to be in the range of average 5 per cent, was earlier to come into effect on 1 April. But the hike was deferred due to Lok Sabha elections. "The new user fee will come into effect from 3 June, 2024," NHAI official said. The change in toll fee is part of an annual exercise to revise the rates that are linked to the changes in the wholesale price index (CPI)-based inflation. There are around 855 user fee plazas on the national highway. *—PTI*

Norway Chess: Praggu enters world's top 10

STAVANGER, 2 JUNE

Praggnanandhaa enters world's top 10 at Norway Chess tournamentStavanger, 2 June Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa scored a massive, hard-earned victory over world number two Fabiano Caruana of the United States and made his way to the top 10 of world rankings after the end of fifth round of Norway Chess tournament. Carlsen outwitted Firouzja Alireza of France from a drawn rook and pawns endgame. With five rounds still to come, he is followed by Praggnanandhaa on 8.5 points while a distant fourth now is Alireza who remained on 6.5 following his loss.Caruana on five is in fifth spot while Ding Liren is clearly not enjoying the event with just 2.5 points to his credit. *—PTI*

Real Madrid win another Champions League title

LONDON, 2 JUNE

In an explosion of gold and silver confetti, Real Madrid held aloft the Champions League trophy for a record-extending 15th time on Saturday. The most familiar sight in European club soccer's great est competition felt as fresh as ever after a 2-0 win against Borussia Dortmund in the final at Wembley Stadium. Carvajal headed Madrid in front in the 74th minute and Vinicius doubled the Spanish giant's lead nine minutes later. Ancelotti's fifth Champions League title was his third in two spells with Madrid. *—AP*

>>>More on Page 8

Delhi CM Kejri surrenders at Tihar jail

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday surrendered at the Tihar jail here after his interim bail granted by the Supreme Court in the excise policy-linked money laundering case ended on June 1.

He was granted the relief for campaigning in the Lok Sabha elections.

Before surrendering, Kejriwal hugged his children and touched his parents' feet before leaving in a car for a scheduled visit to the Rajghat and the Hanuman temple at Connaught Place.

Kejriwal then paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at the Raj Ghat, offered prayers at the Hanuman temple in Connaught Place and addressed AAP leaders and workers at the party office. During his address, Kejriwal said, "I am going back to jail not because I was involved in corruption but because I raised voice against dictatorship," he said.

"I was given a 21-day (relief) by Supreme Court. These 21 days were unforgettable. I did not waste even a minute. I campaigned for saving the country. AAP is not important, country comes first," he said. He said that all exit polls predicting a third term for BJP-led NDA at Centre were "fake". Delhi court sends Kejriwal to judicial custody till 5 June. Duty judge Sanjeev Aggarwal passed the order after he was produced before the court through video conference. *—PTI*

EXIT POLLS 2024

BJP may win in Andhra, tough contest in Odisha

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik **PHOTO: PTI/ANI**

HYDERABAD/ BHUBANESHWAR, 2 JUNE

The exit polls on Sunday have predicted victory for National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly polls held on 13 May. Odisha will see a neck-and-neck contest between BJD and BJP over which party will form the next government in the eastern state. As per the data given by Axis My India both parties to get 62-80 seats.

As per the projections, BJP, which had a 32.49% vote share in 2019 in Odisha, is now likely to secure 42% votes, an increase of nearly 10%. Congress is likely to be a distant third with five to eight seats and 12% votes, the figures show.

BJP, a former ally of BJD, has, in recent years, established itself as the coastal sate's principal Opposition party. In their campaigning for the recent assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP had their attack around Naveen Patnaik's health, and how the senior politician was trying to "impose" his trusted aide, bureaucrat-turned-BJD member VK Pandian, who is from Tamil Nadu, as Odisha's CM.

The exit polls predicted a clear majority for BJP-led NDA in Andhra Pradesh, while predicting that INDIA bloc is unlikely to open an account.

Axis My India predicted 78-96 seats for TDP, 55-77 seats for YSRCP, 16-18 seats for JSP, 4-6 seats for BJP, and 0-2 seats for Congress.

- According to News 18 exit poll, NDA will win 19-22 seats of the 25 seats, YSRCP is expected to win 5-8 seats and INDIA bloc may draw a blank. As per ABP C Voter exit poll, NDA is expected to win 21-25 seats and YSCRP is likely to win 0-4 seats

Ruling YSRCP contested on all 175 seats eyeing another term while as part of a seat-sharing arrangement among NDA partners, TDP is contesting on 144 Assembly seats, Jana Sena on 21, and BJP on 10.

According to News 18 exit poll, NDA will win 19-22 seats of the 25 seats, YSRCP is expected to win 5-8 seats and INDIA bloc may draw a blank. As per ABP C Voter exit poll, NDA is expected to win 21-25 seats and YSCRP is likely to win 0-4 seats.

ABP C Voter exit poll has also predicted that the INDIA bloc is likely to draw a blank in Andhra Pradesh.

BJD, on the other hand, pegged its campaign around Patnaik government's welfare works and its schemes.

—Salar News with Agency

Vistara flight gets bomb threat, lands in Mumbai

MUMBAI, 2 JUNE

A Mumbai-bound Vistara flight with 306 people onboard from Paris received a bomb threat after which a full emergency was declared at the city airport prior to its arrival here, a source said. The flight landed at 10.19 am on Sunday, the source said. Vistara on Sunday reported that its," flight UK 024 from Paris' Charles de Gualle airport to Mumbai received a hand written note on an air-sickness bag threatening a bomb," said the source.

"There were 294 passengers and 12 crew onboard Paris-Mumbai flight," the source said. Vistara in a statement confirmed that "a security concern has been noted by our staff while onboard the airline's flight UK 024 operating from Paris to Mumbai on 2 June." *—PTI*

EYE ON 13 JUNE

BJP, Cong release list of candidates for MLC polls

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

BJP and Congress announced the list of its candidates for biennial Legislative Council election on 13 June, on Sunday.

The elections were necessitated due to the retirement of 11 members on 17 June.

BJP has named former minister CT Ravi, sitting MLC N Ravikumar and party leader Dr M G Muley. JD(S) is likely to announce its candidate on Monday.

Congress has fielded Karnataka Science and Technology Minister NS Boseraju and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra Siddaramaiah, Vasanth Kumar, K Govindraj, Ivan D'Souza, Bilkis Bano and Jagdev Guttedar.

The party also announced Basanagouda Badarli for the forthcoming MLC byelection for a seat that fell vacant owing to the resignation of former chief minister Jagadish Shettar, who joined Congress briefly after he rebelled against BJP when he was denied a ticket in the 2023 Assembly election.

Based on the present strength of MLAs in Assembly, Congress can field seven candidates, BJP-JD(S) combine can field four. Congress has 133 MLAs,

Bilkis Bano with Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao **PHOTO: SALAR**

- Based on the present strength of MLAs in Assembly, Congress can field seven candidates, BJP-JD(S) combine can field four

BJP - 66 and JD(S) - 19 MLAs. Congress claims that it has the support of four other MLAs, including two independents.

"The election dates to fill that post have not been announced yet but our party has declared him as our candidate whenever the election takes place," a Congress leader told PTI.

—PTI

RAIN BRINGS METRO, TRAFFIC TO A HALT IN CITY

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

Heavy rains lashed the City on Sunday evening, leading to disruptions in metro services. A tree branch fell on the metro tracks between MG Road and Trinity Station, causing disruptions in train services. The rains also lead to waterlogging and gridlock on 58 major roads.

Following the Metro delay, Srivas Rajagopalan, Executive Assistant to the Public Relations department of Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), said, "Due to heavy rains from 7.26 pm branches have fallen on the viaduct track between MG Road and Trinity. So there is no train service between MG Road and Indiranagar."

The Bengaluru Traffic Police has issued numerous advisories throughout the day, urging commuters to avoid several routes due to slow traffic and blocked roads. Slow traffic was reported due to waterlogging at several locations including Veerannapalya junction, Hebbal, Bannerghatta Road, BTM Layout, Silk Board.

—Salar News

PHOTO: THEBANGALORE360

T'GANA FORMATION DAY

Revanth launches state anthem

HYDERABAD, 2 JUNE

Claiming that Telangana suffered "destruction of 100 years" during the 10-year BRS rule, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Sunday said his government is working for the state's cultural and economic revival and expressed his desire to make it a destination for the world. After a march-past by the contingents, he unveiled the new state anthem, "Jaya Jaya Hey Telangana," written by Ande Sri and composed by Oscar winning musician MM Keeravani.

Addressing the 10th Telangana formation day celebrations organised by the state government here, he thanked Congress leader Sonia Gandhi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for fulfilling the decades-long demand of statehood for Telangana during the previous UPA regime at the Centre. He also defended his government's decision to invite Sonia Gandhi to the event though she did not attend.

A Revanth Reddy **PHOTO: PTI**

He recalled the crucial role played by Sonia Gandhi, former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar and also late BJP leader Sushma Swaraj in the passage of the bill for formation of Telangana state in Parliament in 2014. Recalling the the role of Sonia Gandhi, Meira Kumar and also Sushma Swaraj in passage of Telangana bill in Lok Sabha in 2014, Reddy thanked them on behalf of the state's people.

Sushma Swaraj, who was Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha then, had extended cooperation for the passage of the bill, he said.

He accused BRS of destroying Telangana's culture and traditions. Soon after taking over, his government had restored "freedom" and made the government accessible to people, he added.

According to Reddy, the previous Chief Minister's camp office-cum-official residence has been named after social reformer Jyotiba Phule and a mechanism to receive representations from people on their grievances has been set up there. *—PTI*

City to have Cauvery water supply disruption for 2 days

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) announced a two-day disruption in the Cauvery water supply to Bengaluru on 6 and 7 June. This planned shutdown is to enable the connection works for the implementation of the Cauvery water supply Phase 5 project. The BWSSB will shut down the Cauvery Stage 1, 2, and 3 water supply units for 12 hours, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, on both days. For Cauvery Stage 4, phase 1 and 2, there will be a 4-hour shutdown of the water supply units for Ghats, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. BWSSB has urged residents in areas likely to be affected by the disruption to cooperate and store sufficient water. *—Salar News*

2 teen girls drown in Chikkaballapur

GAURIBIDANUR, 2 JUNE

Two 14-year-old girls drowned in a tank near Gauribidanur on Saturday evening. The deceased are Joya Patel and Alia Patel who are cousins. Both were from Mumbai. While Joya is from Behandar Uttan Road, Mumbai, Alia was residing in Daiser Khandhar Pada, Mumbai. The deceased had come to visit their relative Shabbir Ahmed in Mariyappanpalya during vacations. The deceased along with their family had gone to Dandigaanahalli tank in Manchenahalli taluk. It is learnt that they were playing when they accidentally fell into the water. Though they were taken to a hospital they were declared brought dead. Manchenahalli police have registered a case. *—PTI*

Cubbon Park Walkers to celebrate environment day

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

The Cubbon Park Walkers' Association (CPWA) will join hands with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to celebrate World Environment Day on 5 June. The event will see the planting of saplings at Rani Park, Wilson Garden, in the presence of Sandalwood celebrities. The tree planting ceremony is scheduled to begin at 10 am and is aimed at promoting environmental awareness and contributing to Bengaluru's green cover. The CPWA said that this initiative aims to promote the growing concern for environmental issues and the importance of citizen participation in creating a more sustainable City. *—Salar News*

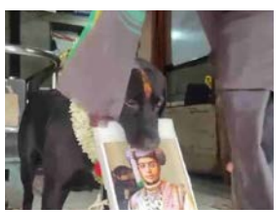


PHOTO: SALAR

Mysuru Dog predicts Modi as next PM candidate

MYSURU, 2 JUNE

With only two days remaining for Lok Sabha Election results, excitement is building across the country. While exit polls predict a victory for BJP, an unusual predictor from Mysuru has also weighed in on the outcome. A two-year-old dog named Bhairava, residing at the Kalabhai raveshwar temple on KT Street, has predicted a win for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Bhairava's owner, Gopinath, conducted a unique experiment where he placed portraits of Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi in front of the dog. Bhairava chose Modi's portrait, indicating a predicted victory for the incumbent Prime Minister. Additionally, when shown portraits of M Laxman and Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wodeyar, Bhairava picked Yaduveer's portrait. *—PTI*

Kidnapping case: SIT still in search of Bhavani Revanna

SIT has constituted various teams to look for Bhavani

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

The Special Investigation Team carried out searches at various locations in the last 24 hours looking for Bhavani Revanna, mother of suspended JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, in connection with a woman kidnap case as she was not present at her residence at Holenarasipura in Hassan district, sources said on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said a search is on to "arrest" Bhavani, who is found "absconding". She is hiding somewhere and will be arrested soon, he added. "They (Special Investigation Team) are searching for her (Bhavani) to arrest her. It's not known where she is. She will be arrested once she is found. It is a due process of

Bhavani Revanna PHOTO: PTI

law and nothing else," Parameshwara told reporters here.

The SIT had issued a notice to Bhavani asking her to be present at her home on June 1 as there was a need to question her in the kidnap case linked to allegations of sexual abuse against her son. When a team of SIT sleuths reached Bhavani's house, 'Chennambika Nilaya', she was not present.

Two women lawyers reached 'Chennambika Nilaya' on Saturday evening and met the SIT officials. They did not disclose the purpose behind the meeting.

It is learnt that Bhavani had communicated through her lawyers that she was unwell and would appear before them (SIT) shortly. Bhavani's husband and Holenarasipura JD(S) MLA HD Revanna is on bail in the same case.

The SIT carried out searches at various locations including Mysuru, Hassan, Bengaluru, Mandya and Ramanagara. The searches were also done at Bhavani's relatives' houses to track her, but she was not found, sources said. Sources said the SIT has constituted various teams to look for Bhavani.

Prajwal was arrested over allegations of sexually abusing several women. JD(S) first family, especially former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda's son Revanna, his wife Bhavani and son Prajwal, is in soup after scores of explicit videos came out on 21 April.

The Karnataka government formed the SIT to probe the cases against Prajwal on the recommendation of the Karnataka State Commission for Women chairperson Nagalakshmi Chowdhary, who wrote to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to investigate the matter.

Prajwal, facing sexual abuse allegations, returned from Germany on Friday and was immediately arrested by the SIT at the Bengaluru airport. *—PTI*

BBMP Commissioner Tushar Girinath visits a strong room at Mount Carmel College to check the security ahead of the Lok Sabha counting day, in Bengaluru, on Sunday PHOTO: SALAR

City all set for 4 June, B'luru gets 3 counting centres

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath has asked the directed officials to take appropriate measures to prevent any untoward incidents at the counting centres where the votes of the Lok Sabha elections will be counted on 4 June. He said, "Inspection at all the polling booths in the City is completed and we have deployed micro observers, voting supervisors, and voting assistants during the counting process. Each room will accommodate 14 tables, with additional tables provided in larger rooms."

Girinath ensured that to maintain transparency, each room will be equipped with CCTV cameras, and a separate room will be given to the observers to monitor the counting process, an election officer room, and a media centre to update on the counting process. "All the officers are asked to report at the counting station at 6.00 am and the process will begin at 8:00 am at the three Lok Sabha constituencies of Bengaluru Central, Bengaluru City and Bengaluru South."

Girinath said the counting stations will be opened at 7.45 am, with the EVM count commencing after the postal ballot count at 8 am. "To enhance accuracy and errors, staffs in each Assembly constituency are to be identified by different colour badges. Identity cards and other details will be given out on Tuesday", he said.

In the Bengaluru Central constituency, the counting will take place at Mount Carmel College on Palace Road, Vasanthanagar. In the Bengaluru City constituency, the vote counting will be held at St. Joseph College on Mallya Road. Whereas, for Bengaluru South, the counting will occur at SSMRV College in Jayanagar's 9th Block.

Girinath said, "The counting of EVM votes is expected to be completed by around 1 pm but the final declaration of results will be delayed due to the mandatory verification of VVPAT paper slips from five randomly selected polling stations in each Assembly constituency, as mandated by the Supreme Court. This verification process is expected to take about three hours, with the final results anticipated by around 6 pm." *—Salar News*

Manjunath seeks extra security at counting centre

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

Ahead of the counting of votes on 4 June, BJP candidate from Bengaluru Rural CN Manjunath and son-in-law of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda wrote to the Election Commission (EC) requesting security measures at the counting centre, expressing concerns about a possible clash, In his letter to the EC, Manjunath requested deployment of additional police forces to maintain law and order during the counting day. He has asked for thorough screening of all individuals entering the counting area. *—PTI*

ARRIVAL OF MONSOON

IMD issues yellow alert for Bengaluru for next 5 days

Motorists struggle to ride in the waterlogged tank bund road near Hosakerehalli Lake, in Bengaluru on Sunday PHOTO: SALAR

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for Bengaluru, forecasting rain for the next five days with chances of thunderstorms. This comes after heavy rains lashed the City on Saturday, leading to traffic disruptions due to waterlogging.

The weather department predicts cloudy skies with intermittent rain and thundershowers for Bengaluru from till 4 June. Rain is also expected on 5 and 6 June. The maximum temperature in the City is expected to hover around 33.8 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature will be around 26.9 degrees Celsius.

The arrival of the monsoon is attributed to a cyclonic circulation over the southeast Arabian Sea and another over the west-central Bay of Bengal. These systems, along with strong westerly winds, are creating favourable conditions for widespread rainfall across Kerala, Mahe, Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Karnataka. Residents in these areas can expect thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph along with the rain.

On 6 June, heavy rain and strong winds are predicted for several districts in the State, including Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru Urban, Bagalkot, Gadag, Koppal, Raichur, Vijayapura, Yadgir, Hassan, Mandya, Mysuru, and Tumakuru. Similar conditions are expected for Belagavi, Dharwad, Gadag, several Bengaluru districts, Chitradurga, Davangere, Hassan, Mandya, and Mysuru on 7 June as well.

While Bengaluru experiences moderate rain, isolated heavy showers are forecast for interior Karnataka from 2 – 6 June. *—Salar News*

CRIME BEAT

Chamarajanagar: Man stabs brother to death, arrested

C'NAGAR, 2 JUNE

A 45-year-old man was allegedly stabbed to death by his brother in Gundlupet taluk following an argument on Saturday.

The accused, identified as Kumar, is charged with murder. According to police, Kumar had been harassing his sister-in-law. This often caused disputes between the brothers, leading them to live separately. On Saturday night, Kumar visited his brother's house and started an altercation, accusing his sister-in-law of being involved with someone else. In a fit of rage, Kumar stabbed his brother with a knife, killing him on the spot.

The Gundlupet police have arrested Kumar, and the deceased's body has been sent to the hospital for postmortem. The deceased's wife has complained to the Gundlupet police, and a case has been registered. *—Salar News*

RESIDENTS HOLDS FREE NOTEBOOK DISTRIBUTION DRIVE

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

The Bharatinagar Residents' Forum (BRF), led by social worker NS Ravi, organised a free notebook distribution programme for underprivileged children on Sunday. This initiative aimed to support economically backward children by providing them with essential school supplies. The program was held at the Sri Gangamma Temple Precincts in Doddakunte, Bangalore, and saw 300 poura karmika children receive 10 notebooks each.

Esteemed guests were invited to grace the occasion, including Padma Shri awardee Dr KS Rajanna, a renowned social worker, Sharanya Shetty, an actress, and social worker Basavaraj. Speaking at the event, Dr. Rajanna, attributed his Padma Shri award to the "blessings and good wishes" of the people and emphasised the importance of education for children.

"Their education is the only way they can move forward in life. These children are the pillars of our country, who will uphold the future." he said. *—Salar News*

Exit polls false, Cong will win in K'taka: DKS

BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar says the exit polls results will be false similar to last year's Karnataka assembly elections.

Addressing the reporters on Sunday Shivakumar recalled the 2018 Assembly elections when exit polls had underestimated Congress's performance. "Exit polls had predicted that Congress would not come to power, giving only about 80-85 seats.

However, our internal survey had projected 136 seats, which was eventually achieved," he stated.

Shivakumar added that the exit polls' typical survey is a very small sample size of 5000 people and not accurate. "The people of Karnataka, particularly women, have shown faith in their guarantee schemes. Our guarantee schemes have reached people effectively, especially in the second phase of the elections," he added.

DK Shivakumar PHOTO: PTI

> **The people of Karnataka, particularly women, have shown faith in their guarantee schemes. Our guarantee schemes have reached people effectively**
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

Shivakumar drew a contrast between Congress and BJP's approach to politics, stating, "Congress focuses on development, while BJP relies on emotive issues."

Refraining from commenting on national results, he expressed confidence that Congress would secure a double-digit figure in Karnataka. —Salar News

TIME TO TAKE ACTION

Seegehalli Lake reeks of junk & sewage

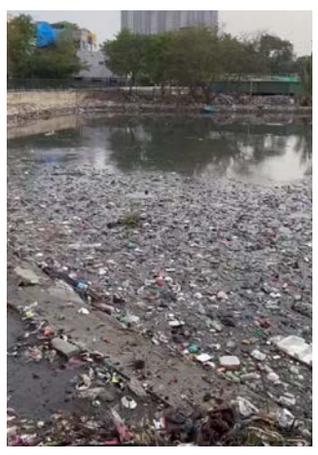
BENGALURU, 2 JUNE

Once a haven for nature enthusiasts, Seegehalli Lake located near KR Puram is now drowning in a sea of garbage and sewage. Years of neglect and poor upkeep have transformed this scenic waterbody spread over 31.5 acres into a dumping ground, sparking outrage among residents and lake experts.

Residents suffer

The lake's current state has affected those staying near the lake in many ways. Kavitha Prasad, a homemaker residing right next to the lake, said, "From the time the lake started accumulating all the garbage, the water started to change its colour. My kids and my husband kept falling ill because of viral fevers. This was because of the bacteria as well as the mosquitoes that breed in that water."

Aira P, another resident, said: "We always went out for a walk on the trails of the lake, but now we have completely



Seegehalli lake in KR Puram PHOTO: SALAR

- The root of the problem lies in the open stormwater drains that residents, including those in high-rise buildings, misuse to dispose of their waste.BBMP has proposed fencing drains to prevent littering

stopped it due to the foul smell of the lake. We cannot even open the windows because of the stench and going to even within 100 metres of the lake is hard for us."

Santosh James Samuel, a MBBS student staying near the lake, said: "We held a meeting with all the residents to create an awareness of the pollution of the lakes. We have decided that if the authorities do not take any action, we will take the help of NGOs and environmentalists to clean the lakes ourselves," he said.

Fencing of lakes

The root of the problem lies in the open stormwater drains that residents, including those in high-rise buildings, misuse to dispose of their waste. The City's civic body, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), has proposed fencing the drains to prevent littering.

"The lake was rejuvenated in 2021 and we are not going to do anything to rejuvenate it again. Once the drains are covered, discarding garbage will be much harder. Also, the recent rains have caused the sewage water to enter the stormwater drains and in turn has polluted the water even more. Cleaning the lake itself is a challenge because it's not accessible by boat for manual cleaning due to its current condition," a BBMP official said.

Experts have warned of the dangers of this persistent inflow of waste. Dr TV Ramachandra, a lake expert from Indian Institute of Science, told Salar News "The rising pollutants in the lake could lead to eutrophication, a process where excess nutrients trigger excessive algae growth. This unchecked growth depletes oxygen levels, creating a dead zone incapable of supporting aquatic life." *—Salar News*

Locals unite to save Madikeri lake

COOVERCOLLY INDRESH
MADIKERI, 2 JUNE

Tavarekere Lake, which is spanned approximately 3.8 acres located in Kushalnagar in Kodagu district is dying a slow death. The encroachment and neglect have taken a heavy toll on the lake. One of the primary concerns is the direct discharge of sewage from surrounding areas into the lake, which has decimated aquatic life.

The local community has demanded comprehensive measures to improve the condition of the lake over a long time. Deputy Commissioner Venkat Raja has also responded positively to the development of the lake. But there is a glimmer of hope for the locals as the town panchayat and district authorities have now formulated an action plan to dredge the lake, remove accumulated silt and debris, and restore it to its former glory.

Kushalnagar Town Panchayat chief officer Krishna Kumar told **Salar News**, "We have already surveyed the lake and estimation for fencing and other works being done. Once the estimation is over we will be able to create an action plan." This initiative aims to dredge the lake, remove accumulated silt and debris, and restore it to its former glory.

A resident Chandra Mohan said, "Many people earlier encroached on the lake due to negligence of officials. Ignorance of the bureaucrats at the gram panchayat is the main reason for the lake's present status. We alerted the panchayat member s months ago but it has failed to stop the dumping of garbage into the lake." Kumar said that the revival of the lake is expected to bring back aquatic life, improve water quality, and provide a reliable water source for drinking and agriculture. *—Salar News*

Tavarekere Lake in Kodagu is dying a slow death PHOTO: SALAR

PHOTO: PTI

Punjab records 62.80% voter turnout

CHANDIGARH, 2 JUNE

Punjab has recorded 62.80 per cent voting in the 13 Lok Sabha seats that took place on Saturday, recording a dip of almost three percentage points compared to the 2019 turnout. The figure for the last parliamentary elections was 65.96 per cent. ABathinda witnessed the highest turnout of 69.36 per cent while Amritsar recorded the lowest poll percentage of 56.06, the data released on Sunday showed . The polling percentage in Ferozepur was 67.02, Patiala 63.63, Faridkot 63.34, Sangrur 64.63, Khadoor Sahib 62.55, Anandpur Sahib 61.98, Hoshiarpur 58.86, Fatehgarh Sahib 62.53, Jalandhar 59.70 and Ludhiana 60.12. A total of 2,14,61,739 voters, including 1,01,74,240 women and 773 third-gender electors, were eligible to vote in Punjab. *—PTI*

1 arrested in attack on BJP MP Ram Kripal Yadav

PATNA, 2 JUNE

A person was arrested on Sunday in connection with the attack on the convoy of BJP MP Ram Kripal Yadav in Patna, police said. The accused was identified as Bikash Yadav, a resident of Masaurhi, they said, adding that a special team was formed to nab the eight other accused who were on the run. Yadav alleged that he and his cavalcade were attacked by supporters of RJD about an hour after polling was over in his Patliputra Lok Sabha constituency. He claimed that some of his supporters were also injured in the attack that took place around 7.30 pm in the Masaurhi area of Patna. Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary demanded strict action against those involved in the attack. *—PTI*

Religious activity in Visva Bharati campus, says SFI

KOLKATA, 2 JUNE

Left wing Students Federation of India (SFI) has alleged "saffron forces" are holding 'certain religious activities' on Visva Bharati campus with over 12 rooms allotted to one such organisation in the university guest house. Responding to the charges, Visva Bharati authorities, however, said, "no religious meet has been allowed within the university campus" but any room of the varsity-run guest house can been booked by any "bona-fide organisation as per applicable rates". SFI leveled the 'saffronisation' charges a day ago citing reports that the Shankaracharya of Puri Swami Nischalananda Saraswati will be attending a three-day religious event at a Bolpur auditorium *—PTI*

Mehbooba requests MEA to return man's body

SRINAGAR, 2 JUNE

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has requested the Ministry of External Affairs to repatriate the body of a Rajouri resident who passed away in a road accident in Saudi Arabia. The PDP chief said that the victim, Kabir Khan, was working as a labourer in Saudi Arabia. "Kabir Khan from Rajouri working as a labourer in Saudi Arabia has passed away in a tragic road accident. His family awaits his mortal remains. Request @MEAIndia @DrSJaishankar to kindly take up this issue at the earliest to repatriate his body. Nearest contact for the deceased in Saudi Arabia- Kafeel +966550568146," Mufti posted on X. In a separate post, Mufti condoled the deaths of sixteen people in a tragic road accident in Jammu's Akhnoor city. "Deepest sympathies & condolences to their families and loved ones," Mufti said on X. *—ANI*

Ensure guidelines are followed: INDIA to EC

Opposition parties have asked their agents to monitor the vote-counting process closely

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

A delegation of leaders from the INDIA Opposition bloc met the full bench of the Election Commission (EC) on Sunday and urged it to ensure that all the guidelines are followed on 4 June, when the votes polled in the Lok Sabha election will be counted, including declaring the postal-ballot results before the outcome of the electronic voting machines (EVMs) is announced.

Briefing the media after the meeting, Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi said this was the third time that a delegation of opposition leaders visited the poll panel during the general election and, among other things, urged the officials to ensure that the postal ballots are counted and their results declared before the results of the EVMs are announced.

The INDIA bloc leaders requested the EC to instruct its officials that they should follow the guidelines. Communist Party of India (Marxist) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury said they have urged the poll panel to ensure that its own guidelines are implemented, which includes ensuring that the control units of the EVMs are moved through CCTV-monitored corridors and a verification of the current date-and-time display of the control units is done.

"This verification is important because unless it is done, there is no authenticity that it is the same control unit that came from the polling booth, that it has not been changed," he said.

Yechury also said the start and end time and date of the polling process should be checked on the control unit.

"The slips and tags that are put when an EVM is sealed should be shown to all the counting agents for verification. After pressing the button for the results, reconfirming the date of poll is not done ... that has to be ensured," he said.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Ajay Maken flagged the new rule that candidates' counting agents are not allowed at the Assistant Returning Officer (ARO) tables during the vote counting process on 4 June.

Calling it an issue "bigger than the alleged EVM rigging," the Congress leader urged the Election Commission of India to address it.

However, the Chief Election Officer of Delhi clarified that the counting agents of candidates are allowed at the tables of RO and AROs. *—PTI*

General Secretary Sitaram Yechury, DMK MP TR Baalu, CPI General Secretary D Raja and other INDIA bloc leaders after the meeting with the full bench of Election Commission of India, in New Delhi on Sunday *PHOTO: ANI*

EC asks Jairam to share details of claim on Shah calling DMs

New Delhi, 2 JUNE

Election Commission (EC) sought factual information from Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Sunday on his claim that Home Minister Amit Shah has called up 150 district magistrates and collectors ahead of 4 June counting of votes for the Lok Sabha polls. In a letter to Ramesh, the poll panel has asked him to share details regarding his claim by 7pm on Sunday. Ramesh had alleged that "the outgoing Home Minister has been calling up DMs/Collectors.

—PTI

Exit polls 'bogus attempt' to justify rigging, says Cong

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

Terming the exit polls "bogus", Congress on Sunday said they were a "deliberate attempt" to justify rigging of the elections and part of "psychological games" being played by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lower the morale of the INDIA bloc workers. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi dubbed the exit polls as "Modi media poll".

"This is not called an exit poll but its name is 'Modi media poll'. This is Modi ji's poll, it is his fantasy poll," Gandhi told reporters at the AICC headquarters via video conference.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh also hit out at Prime Minister Modi for holding several meetings, including a long brainstorming session to review the 100-day agenda of the "new government", saying these were "pressure tactics" to send out a signal that he is coming back.

—PTI

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Khandu, man behind BJP's Arunachal win

ITANAGAR, 2 JUNE

Pema Khandu, a sports enthusiast and music aficionado, has emerged as a tall leader in Arunachal Pradesh over the years, especially after a constitutional crisis in 2016 that led to the imposition of president's rule.

BJP on Sunday returned to power in Arunachal Pradesh for the third time in a row, as the party won 46 seats in the 60-member assembly.

Khandu's political odyssey began amid a personal tragedy. The untimely demise of his father, former chief minister Dorjee Khandu, in a helicopter crash in 2011, thrust him under the spotlight.

Although he had joined Congress in 2000 and held various positions, it was not until he won a by-election uncontested from his father's constituency Mukto, that he truly began to carve out his political path.

When the central rule was lifted, he became a minister in the Kalikho Pul-led government, supported by BJP. However, this government was short-lived. The Supreme Court's intervention restored Tuki, who soon resigned, and at just 37, Khandu became the chief minister in July 2016.

Since then, Khandu and his government have twice changed their party affiliation in quick succession – from the Congress to the People's Party of Arunachal (PPA) in September 2016 and then to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in December of the same year.

Just three months into his term, 43 ruling Congress MLAs defected to the PPA, an ally of the BJP. He captivates audiences with renditions of Kishore Kumar and Mohammad Rafi classics at official gatherings. The defeat of Arunachal Pradesh education minister and Yachuli MLA Taba Tedir came as a shock to BJP which returned to power in the state for the third time in a row on Sunday, bagging 46 seats in the 60-member assembly. *—PTI*

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu at a press conference in Itanagar on Sunday *PHOTO: ANI*

LOTUS FAILS TO BLOOM IN SIKKIM

GANGTOK, 2 JUNE

BJP contested in 31 assembly seats but failed to win a single one in Sikkim where it had 12 members in the outgoing House.

The results of the Sikkim Assembly were announced on Sunday with the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha returning to power by winning 31 of the 32 seats. BJP could secure only 5.18 per cent of the votes in the Himalayan state. SKM got 58.38 per cent votes while Sikkim Democratic Front bagged 27.37 per cent votes. Thapa, a sitting MLA and a former minister lost to Rai by 2,968 votes. Rai polled 6,723 votes while Thapa got 3,755. Sikkim Democratic Front's DB Thapa polled 1,623 votes. *—PTI*

Security personnel and locals clash in Sandeshkhali *PHOTO: PTI*

Women scuffle with police in Sandeshkhali

KOLKATA, 2 JUNE

In less than 24 hours after the election was over, trouble-torn Sandehkhali witnessed another round of skirmishes between women and the police on Sunday when the personnel went there and detained one person in connection with attacks on policemen.

Local women in Agarhati village in Sandeshkhali area got involved in a scuffle with the Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel, fell tree trunks, and blocked roads when the police personnel reached there in search of a few persons accused of attacking them on Saturday night, a senior police officer said.

"We have not arrested anyone, but local women have started protesting. Some of our female colleagues are injured. We are trying to talk to them and remove the barricades from the roads," the officer in Basirhat Police District told PTI.

There was an attempt by local women to snatch the detained person, but the move was foiled, he said.

Sandeshkhali has been on the boil since 5 January, when a team of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was attacked when it had gone to raid the premises of TMC strongman Shahjahan Sheikh in connection with an alleged ration scam. Sheikh and his accomplices were arrested on 29 February. *—PTI*

Delhi BJP chief, others protesting against Kejri's visit to Rajghat detained

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

Police on Sunday detained several BJP workers, including the party's Delhi unit chief Virendra Sachdeva, who were protesting against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's visit to the Rajghat ahead of his scheduled surrender at Tihar jail.

All protesters were let off with a warning after an hour, Sachdeva said in a statement.

Delhi Police said some protesters were removed from Rajghat area to maintain law and order.

"To maintain law and order, some protesters were removed from Rajghat area and were taken to Kamla Market Police Station," a senior police officer said.

BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said around 100 BJP workers, including Sachdeva, were detained at the police station.

Lashing out at Kejriwal's visit to Rajghat, Sachdeva said, "A person who is behind bars for the liquor scam is going to Rajghat to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi."

"Arvind Kejriwal and his ministers could not even provide proper water facility for the people of Delhi and everyone knows that he is a thief," he told PTI Videos. *—PTI*

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva with leaders shout slogans during a protest against Arvind Kejriwal, at Rajghat in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

BJP worker killed in Bengal post-poll violence

KOLKATA, 2 JUNE

A BJP worker was killed by a group of men in West Bengal's Nadia district in post-poll violence, with the saffron party pointing fingers at the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC). The TMC, however, claimed that the killing was a fallout of a family feud. Police sources said the incident happened at Kaliganj in the northern part of the district when BJP worker, Hafijur Sheikh, was playing carrom with others on Saturday night. It is alleged that 10-12 people came on motorbikes and first shot Sheikh and then hacked him, killing him on the spot. Local people demonstrated for over two hours and did not allow the police to lift the body. The body was later sent for post-mortem examination.

- It is alleged that 10-12 people came on motorbikes and first shot Sheikh and then hacked him, killing him on the spot. Local people demonstrated for over two hours not allowing police to lift the body

The BJP's Uttar Nadia unit president Arjun Biswas alleged that TMC goons killed the party worker. District TMC leader Rukbanur Rahman, however, blamed family feud behind the murder and the Trinamool Congress has no role in it. Family members of the deceased demanded immediate arrest of the culprits. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

BJP SEEKS REPOLL IN WB'S DIAMOND HARBOUR

KOLKATA, 2 JUNE

BJP has sought repoll at several booths in the Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha seat in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, alleging that malpractices were carried out during the voting process on Saturday.

In a letter to the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) on 1 June, BJP leader Shishir Bajoria said booth agents of the saffron party were driven out, CCTV cameras were found facing in directions other than the polling cubicle and voters were prevented from reaching booths.

"On behalf of Abhijit Das (Bobby), candidate of BJP of the Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha constituency, we request you to grant repolling in several booths", the letter said.

Repoll was sought in booths in the assembly segments of Budge Budge, Falta, Maheshtala, Diamond Harbour, Bishnupur, Satgachia and Metiabruz.

Sitting TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee was seeking reelection from Diamond Harbour.

A voter turnout of 73.79 per cent was recorded in nine Lok Sabha seats of West Bengal that went to polls in the seventh and final phase on Saturday. *—PTI*

CONFIDENT OF 3RD TERM

PM to chair 7 meetings for 100-day plan of new govt

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday stressed the need to ensure regular fire and electrical safety audits in hospitals and other public places as he reviewed the heatwave situation in the country amid fire incidents which have claimed many lives.

He will chair a host of seven meetings, including one on the post-Cyclone Remal situation, especially in the northeast region, and another to review the 100-day agenda of the new government to be sworn in after the Lok Sabha results are announced on 4 June.

Exit polls broadcast on Saturday predicted a massive win for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), with Modi set to retain power for a third straight term.

In the meeting to review the heatwave conditions in parts of the country, Modi instructed officials that proper drills for preventing and handling incidents of fire must be undertaken on a regular basis, according to an official statement.

He also said that regular drills for the maintenance of fire lines in forests and productive utilisation of biomass must be planned.

Modi was briefed that as per forecasts, the heatwave is likely to continue in parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Monsoon this year is likely to be normal and above normal in most parts of the country and below normal in parts of peninsular India, the statement said.

In the meeting to review the post-Cyclone Remal situation, another official statement said, Modi was briefed about its impact in the affected states, including the loss of lives and damage to houses and other properties due to landslides and floods in Mizoram, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura.

Top bureaucrats were part of the meetings the Modi chaired.

Much before the Lok Sabha polling exercise began, Modi had set in motion the exercise for different government ministries to prepare the 100-day agenda for the new government.

He had asked his Council of Ministers to prioritise programmes and initiatives for the first 100 days. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs a meeting to review post-Cyclone Remal situation in the north-east region on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Puri firecracker explosion: Toll mounts to 11

BHUBANESWAR, 2 JUNE

The death toll in the explosion of a stockpile of firecrackers in Odisha's Puri mounted to 11 after two of the injured people died, a senior official said on Sunday. Nineteen people are currently undergoing treatment in various hospitals in Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. Altogether 30 people were injured in the explosion that happened during Lord Jagannath's 'Chandan Yatra', a ritual, on the night of 29 May."Two more people died in the tragedy in Puri. The total death toll increased to 11. Presently, 19 patients are under medical treatment in different hospitals," the office of the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) said in a statement. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had ordered an inquiry into the accident and announced an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased.*—PTI*

Woman gang-raped in UP, 3 arrested

BIJNOR, 2 JUNE

Three men were arrested for allegedly gang-raping a woman here, police said on Sunday.The accused were identified as Shanky, Robin and Ankit, they said.
The incident occurred on Friday when the accused took the woman,24, in their car and raped her near a tube well compound, Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Sanjeev Vajpayee said.
The victim in her complaint told the police that she knew the accused, Vajpayee said.Based on the victim's complaint on Saturday an FIR was registered under section 376 D (gang rape) of the Indian Penal Code, he said. The accused were arrested and further investigation is underway, he added.*—PTI*

Kerala man hacks grandfather over missing cat

THRISSUR, 2 JUNE

A 79-year-old man was allegedly hacked and injured by his grandson following a dispute over the missing of a pet cat in Edakkulam in Thrissur, police said on Sunday. The elderly man suffered injuries on his head, hands and legs during the attack and he is recovering at the government medical college now, they said. According to the statement of the grandfather, there was an argument between him and his grandson Sreekumar, who is in his late 20s, over the missing of their pet cat. In a fit of anger, Sreekumar allegedly hacked his grandfather with a weapon.The accused himself rushed the injured grandfather to the hospital, from where police took him into custody.*—PTI*

Pune crash: Teen's parents in police custody till 5 June

PUNE, 2 JUNE

A Pune court on Sunday remanded parents of a 17-year-old boy allegedly involved in the Porsche car accident in police custody till 5 June in a case pertaining to destruction of evidence. The duo is being probed for their alleged role in tampering with the blood sample of the minor following the car accident on 19 May in Maharashtra's Pune city, which claimed the lives of two IT professionals. The minor's mother, Shivani Agarwal, was arrested on 1 June, after revelation that the boy's blood samples were replaced with hers. The police had taken custody of his father, realtor Vishal Agrawal, arrested earlier in a related case, for allegedly being involved in the destruction of evidence. The police produced the duo before a holiday court in Maharashtra's Pune city and sought their remand, which was allowed till 5 June.*—PTI*

Delhi could become a desert: HC on rising temp

Amid raging heat,Delhi is also reeling under water shortage

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

People collect water at a slum in East Delhi on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

Taking note of the recent temperature spike to 52.3 degrees Celsius in the city, the Delhi High Court has observed that the national capital could become a barren desert if the present generation continues an apathetic view on deforestation.

Delhi's Mungeshpur area on Wednesday logged a maximum temperature of 52.3 degrees Celsius, the highest ever recorded in the city.

"Judicial notice is taken of the fact that as recent as on 30 May, the official temperature recorded in Delhi was 52.3 degrees Celsius. It is not far to see the day when this city may be only a barren desert, in case the present generation continues an apathetic view on deforestation," Justice Tushar Rao Gedela said.

The High Court, which had earlier appointed its former judge Najmi Waziri as the chairperson of an internal departmental committee of city officials dealing with the protection of forests in Delhi, was informed that Waziri was unable to perform his duties due to a lack of infrastructure.

"However, rather than directing the department (of Forest and Wildlife) to provide staff in a diverted capacity, it is considered appropriate to direct the department to pursue the matter in all earnest and in no case shall the approval be delayed beyond 15 June," the court said.

The amicus curiae appointed in the case submitted that once a judicial order was passed, the infrastructure and other facilities required for efficient administration and discharge of responsibilities by the chairperson of the committee have to be complied with at the earliest.

The High Court said after the approval was granted by the competent authority, the infrastructure development should be completed within the next 15 days.

"Since the next date of hearing is already fixed for 29 July, it is expected that all things and requirements of the chairperson and the committee shall be put in place and in full working condition, prior thereto," the court directed.

The court also accepted the suggestion of another amicus curiae to rename the committee and said that now, it should be referred to as the 'Special Empowered Committee' instead of the 'Internal Departmental Committee'.

The court said the strict measures are only to ensure that the committee completes its responsibilities and references made to it, "keeping in view the worsening situation of climatic conditions in Delhi".

—PTI

6 LAKH AFFECTED IN ASSAM DUE TO FLOODS

GUWAHATI, 2 JUNE

The flood situation in Assam remained unchanged with more than six lakh people in 10 districts reeling under waters, officials said on Sunday.

Heavy rains in different parts of the state led to the swelling of river water level, forcing affected people in many areas to evacuate to safety, they said.

Kopili, Barak and Kushiyara rivers were flowing over the danger level.

Altogether 6,01,642 people in Hailakandi Hojai, Morigaon, Karimganj, Nagaon, Cachar, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Karbi Anglong West and Dima Hasao districts remained affected due to the floods.

The death toll in floods and storm since 28 May is at 15, the officials said.

Rescue and relief operations were being carried out by multiple agencies, including NDRF, SDRF, local administration and people.

—PTI

FRESH TIFF WITH K'TAKA

Kerala temple devotees anxious over black magic row

KANNUR, 2 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

The tantri of a temple in Kerala whose name was recently mentioned by Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in connection with an animal sacrifice allegedly carried out here, on Sunday said that the controversy triggered by his remarks was creating anxiety among the devotees.

EP Kuberan Namboodiripad, the tantri or chief priest of the Rajarajeshwara temple at Taliparamba in this district, said that due to the "unnecessary controversy", a lot of devotees were asking if anything as stated by Shivakumar has happened in the temple.

"It is creating anxiety among the devotees. If this discussion continues, it could lead to a situation where the name and reputation of the temple might be tarnished," he said.

Shivakumar, on Saturday, had clarified that a ritual named "Shatru Bhairavi Yaga", which involves the sacrifice of animals, was not performed at the Rajarajeshwara temple in Kerala, but in a private place nearby.

"I'm telling you, I have a lot of respect for the temple....I have not said (ritual was) in the temple. In the temple nothing has happened, I know. It is somewhere near (temple) in a private place, things have happened. This is the information I have got," he had told reporters.

His clarification came after the Kerala government said that no animal sacrifice was carried out near a temple in the northern part of the state, as claimed by Shivakumar.

The Kerala government had also said that it was investigating whether anything as alleged by the Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister happened anywhere else in the state, even though according to initial reports such an incident had not taken place in the southern state.

On Friday, the managing committee of the temple had refuted Shivakumar's allegations and termed his claims as 100 per cent false

RAJOURI FOREST FIRE

Forest officials try to control the fire that broke out in the forest area of Rajouri, in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

Agnikul eyes to launch satellites by 2025: CEO Ravichandran

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

After the successful test-flight of Agnibaan SOrTeD, Chennai-based space start-up Agnikul Cosmos is hoping to start launching satellites early next year.

In an interview with PTI, Agnikul co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Srinath Ravichandran said the 3D-printed semi-cryogenic engines and the rocket will offer quick turnaround for customers who will be able to have customised launch vehicles for their satellites.

"Nine to 12 months I would say. Probably by the end of this financial year or the early part of the next financial year is what we are targeting," Ravichandran said when asked about the commercial orbital launch of the Agnibaan rocket.The first test flight of Agnibaan SOrTeD (suborbital technology demonstrator) on 30 May, which lasted for 66 seconds, came after four unsuccessful attempts.

Agnikul Cosmos successfully test launches the Agnibaan rocket from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, in Sriharikota *PHOTO: ANI*

"It was a big sense of relief. I think we got a lot of learning in differentiating between building a vehicle and launching a vehicle," said Ravichandran, whose idea to use 3D printing technology to build engines and rockets led to Agnikul Cosmos, a space sector start-up incubated at the IIT Madras Research Park in 2017.

The other co-founders were Moin SPM, an operations specialist and Satyanarayanan Chakravarthy, a professor at IIT Madras and Head of the National Centre for Combustion Research and Development.Women engineers Saraniya Periaswamy, the Vehicle Director for Agnibaan SOrTeD and Umamaheswari. K, the Project Director of the first Mission played a key role in the test flight.

—PTI

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

RAVEENA TANDON, DRIVER BEATEN BY MOB IN BANDRA

MUMBAI, 2 JUNE

Bollywood actor Raveena Tandon and her driver were allegedly attacked by a mob in Mumbai amid rash driving claims against the driver, police said on Sunday.

A viral video shows a group of locals accusing Raveena and her driver of assaulting three women.The incident took place on Carter Road in Bandra Saturday night, police said. Her driver allegedly hit three people with the vehicle, following which the crowd became angry and it led to an altercation, the official said.

—PTI

Delhi-Vancouver flight takes off after 22-hour delay

MUMBAI, 2 JUNE

This was at least the third time in the last one week that Air India's ultra-long haul flights had to face inordinate delay *PHOTO: PTI*

Air India's Vancouver flight from Delhi of 1 June finally departed at 3.15am on Sunday after a delay of nearly 22 hours, a source said.

The flight was scheduled to take off at 5.30am on Saturday but a "technical" issue forced the airline to reschedule it.

"The Delhi-Vancouver flight of Air India, which was to depart on Saturday morning, finally left at around 3.15am on Sunday," the source said.

"AI 185...was delayed because of technical issues and subsequently due to crew coming under the mandatory Flight Duty Time Limitations," an Air India spokesperson had said in a statement on Saturday.

This was at least the third time in the last one week that Air India's ultra-long haul flights had to face inordinate delay for one reason or the other.

Earlier, after a delay of more than 30 hours, the airline's Delhi-San Francisco flight, which was originally scheduled to depart at around 1530 hrs on Thursday, took off at 2155 hrs the next day.

However, despite the passengers' plight due to the massive delay, Tata Group-owned Air India did not issue any official statement."If there is a privatisation story that has failed it is @airindia @DGCAIndia AI 183 flight has been delayed for over eight hours , passengers were made to board the plane without air conditioning, and then deplaned after some people fainted in the flight.This is inhuman! @JM_Scindia," Shweta Punj, a journalist had said in a post on X on Thursday night.

—PTI

India sends 90 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Cuba

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

India on Sunday sent 90 tonnes of pharmaceutical ingredients to Cuba as part of its humanitarian assistance to the island nation.
Cuba has been reeling under shortage of essential goods, food items and medicines.

"The government of India is extending humanitarian assistance to the government of the Republic of Cuba. A consignment of approx 90 tonnes of nine Made in India Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) left Mundra port on 2 June," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

"These APIs will be used by the Cuban drug manufacturers to produce essential antibiotics in the dosage form of tablets, capsules, syrups and injections, needed for treatment of chronic communicable diseases," it said. *—PTI*

70 terrorists waiting to infiltrate LoC: J&K DGP

SRINAGAR, 2 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

Around 60 to 70 terrorists are "active" on launch pads across the Line of Control (LoC) and its "degraded capability" has not stopped Pakistan from sending men and material to Jammu and Kashmir, according to Director General of Police Rashmi Ranjan Swain.

Giving an overall assessment of the current security situation along the border areas and the challenge posed by drone droppings, Swain at the same time said Indian security personnel will make it "absolutely hard" for the adversary to succeed.

"In our meetings with our security partners, we generally have come to the conclusion that it is a fact that the adversary or the enemy has not stopped from sending men and material," Swain, who holds the dual charge of the J&K Police and the CID, told PTI in an interview.

He also mentioned the presence of foreign terrorists from the western neighbour operating in the region.

While acknowledging some success in countering these attempts, Swain said that the threat remains and sustained efforts are required to further reduce the "enemy's ability to destabilise the area".

"At any given point of time, perhaps you would have about 60-70 people in groups of five or six at different places waiting to be pushed into our side," Swain said, asserting that together with the Army, paramilitary forces and the Jammu and Kashmir Police, "we are absolutely determined that we will make it absolutely hard for the adversary to succeed".

—PTI

FIRST IN INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Dog undergoes non-invasive heart surgery

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

The surgery was performed on a seven-year-old beagle, Juliet, who suffered from Mitral valve disease *PHOTO: PIXABAY*

A dog with a complex heart condition successfully underwent a minimally invasive heart surgery at a hospital here with veterinarians claiming it to be the first such procedure to be carried out by private practitioners in the Indian subcontinent.

Seven-year-old beagle, Juliet, was suffering from Mitral valve disease for the last two years, Dr Bhanu Dev Sharma, an interventional cardiologist for small animals at Max PetZ Hospital in East of Kailash said on Sunday.

The condition is caused by degenerative changes in mitral valve leaflets which result in back flow of blood within the left upper chamber of the heart and subsequent congestive heart failure (fluid build-up in lungs) as the disease progresses.

The surgeons performed a Transcatheter Edge-to-Edge Repair (TEER) procedure using a valve clamp on 30 May.

"It's called hybrid surgery as it's a combination of a micro surgery and interventional procedure. The best part about this procedure is that its minimally invasive as it's a beating heart procedure and not like an open heart surgery which needs a heart lung bypass machine," Sharma explained.

As per the pet parents, they were giving heart medications to Juliet for the last one year, Sharma said.

They learnt about the procedure from their visit to the US where this surgery was introduced at Colorado state university two years ago, he said.

The pet dog was discharged in a stable medical condition just two days after surgery.

Mitral valve disease is the most common heart condition in dogs in India as well as in rest of the world and accounts for 80 per cent of all heart diseases in dogs in India and worldwide. This disease is amongst one of the major causes of deaths in dogs, Sharma said.

"The only treatment majorly available so far includes medicinal treatment which delays the onset of clinical signs and gives symptomatic relief for sometime. It is not curative," he said.

According to the veterinary hospital, Sharma's team is the first from Asia and second worldwide among private practitioners to have done the procedure successfully.

Sharma and his team of four doctors travelled to Shanghai last year to learn about the procedure. *—PTI*

Heat, floods, 'vanishing' spring: Our weather story

Clockwise from top left: A flood-hit area following heavy rainfall, in Imphal; People walk through a flooded road following rains after the landfall of cyclone 'Remal', in Nagaon district of Assam; child bathes in a waterbody on a hot summer day amid heatwave, in Ranchi; Smoke, flames rise during a forest fire near Himachal Pradesh amid heatwave; Dark clouds hover over the city amid rains, in Kochi **PHOTO: PTI**

Sweltering heatwave in north India that have caused scores of deaths, floods and landslides in the northeast that have affected lakhs of people, a spring season that suggests it could soon "disappear" from the calendar — extreme weather events in the first five months of 2024 have got everyone questioning: where is all this headed?

Despite having made predictions to this effect, climate scientists acknowledge that the temperatures this summer, including the outlier 52.9 degrees Celsius in Delhi, are "alarming, though not surprising".

"This could be the worst summer in the last 120 years, at least for north India. Never have temperatures gone so high — more than 45-47 degrees Celsius — for such a vast region, which is also densely populated. This is a record in itself," Vimal Mishra, Vikram Sarabhai Chair Professor, Civil Engineering and Earth Sciences, IIT Gandhinagar, told PTI.

The temperatures, "similar to those in Africa's Sahara desert," are "far beyond expectations" by at least three or four degrees, according to Mishra.

Earth system scientist Raghu Murtugudde, professor at IIT-Bombay, told PTI this was due to the combined effect of multiple phenomena - climate change, El Nino and the water vapour released by Tonga's Hunga Tonga volcanic eruption in January 2022.

El Nino causes a warming of the sea surface temperatures, affecting the world's weather.

"The Middle East is getting hotter very fast because the desert traps the heat during global warming – warmer atmosphere is more humid and water vapour is a greenhouse gas," Murtugudde said.

"This warming is causing winds over the Arabian Sea to shift northward during summer itself and also during the monsoon. These winds are also warming the Arabian Sea very fast and bringing more humid air to Delhi, thereby raising the heat index.

- Extreme weather events in the first five months of 2024 have got everyone questioning: where is all this headed?

Mishra said such extreme heat has wide-ranging consequences on public health, electricity, water and the economy.

Studies have linked longer, intense heatwaves to a rise in hospitalisations, premature births and also adverse outcomes such as miscarriages in pregnant women. Research has also projected a rise in inflation and a decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) across the world due to climate change.

On 29 May, the day Delhi's Mungeshpur station recorded the exceptional maximum temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius, the city's power demands peaked to an all-time high of 8,302 megawatts.

Even as India Meteorological Department (IMD) is examining the reading for possible errors, regardless, the day's maximum temperature of 46.8 degrees Celsius, recorded at the primary weather station Safdarjung Observatory, is a 79-year high. It broke the previous record of 46.7 degrees Celsius, registered on 17 June, 1945.

The Delhi Fire Services, on 29 May, received information regarding over 200 incidents, of which 183 were fire-related — the highest for a single day so far this year. The national capital is also suffering from a water crisis, with people jumping queues to get water from tankers. This is Delhi's driest May in 10 years.

The hottest temperatures in the country for the day, however, registered from Haryana's Rohtak and Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj - 48.8 degrees Celsius - an all-time high of maximum temperatures in the cities for May.

Una in Himachal logged a 19-year high of 46 degrees Celsius, breaking its previous record of 45.2 degrees seen in June 2005, May 2013 and June 2019. Maximum temperatures in the state were firmly six to eight degrees above normal, with Shimla also registering its highest this season at 31.7 degrees Celsius on May 29.

The week also saw flash floods in Assam and Manipur, and landslides in Mizoram and Meghalaya triggered by Cyclone Remal. At least 6 lakh people have been affected by it.

Murtugudde explains, "Remal stayed intact on land longer because of heat from the Bay of Bengal (a consequence of El Nino) and the land still wet from pre-monsoon rain. That extracted a lot of rain from the cyclone and there are always human factors on hills."

Against the backdrop of sharply rising temperatures in March, with Delhi recording maximum temperatures in the mid-to-late 20s, analyses from the US-based Climate Central showed that climate change was shrinking India's spring season, with winters quickly transitioning to summer-like conditions.

In many northern regions of the country, the "spring season is disappearing," the researchers said.

They also showed that increasingly more states, including Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, faced the likelihood of experiencing over 40 degrees Celsius temperatures in late March, which used to be about five per cent in the 1970s and in fewer states.

Temperatures continued to rise firmly in April, with above-normal temperatures being recorded in parts of Jodhpur and Bikaner in Rajasthan at 40-42 degrees Celsius, and in Goa at 33-35 degrees Celsius.

On 17 April, Mumbai's high of 39.7 degrees Celsius was the warmest ever for the month in the last 14 years. The previous high of 40.6 degrees Celsius was seen on 2 April, 2009.

By 21 April, heatwave to severe heatwave conditions spread to Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, Vidarbha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, with maximum temperatures in the range 40-46 degrees Celsius, 4-6 notches above normal. By the end of the month, more southern regions, including Kerala, came under the heatwave's grip.

The heatwave, part of a larger one impacting billions across South and Southeast Asia, was made about 45 times more likely and 0.85 degrees Celsius hotter due to climate change, scientists from the World Weather Attribution group found.

According to the European Union's climate agency, the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), it was the warmest April ever, making it the 11th consecutive month with record global average temperatures.

El Nino and human-induced climate change together have fuelled the row of record global temperatures, according to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

The UN's climate agency also found the current El Nino event to be among five strongest ones on record. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

'No framework to regulate tourism in Antarctica'

Countries meeting at the 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ACTM) in Kochi from 20-30 May did not adopt a framework to regulate tourism in Antarctica. But they committed to doing so in the near future.

Nations adopted a decision to develop an "ambitious, comprehensive, flexible, and dynamic framework" for regulating tourism and non-governmental activities in Antarctica.

ACTM is an annual meeting that encourages international collaboration on scientific research and sustainable resource management in the icy continent, along with discussing the principles and objectives of the Antarctic Treaty, which went into effect in 1961. The Treaty, which has provisions for using the icy continent for only peaceful purposes, freedom of scientific investigation, and exchange of scientific information, currently has 56 parties, including India.

On the opening day of the ACTM meeting, India, which hosted the meeting, announced that a special working group had been formed to create a tourism framework for Antarctica, for the first time.

"Most of the discussion at the 46th ACTM was about consolidating the decision to consider this framework in years to come, in the next 12 months and beyond. Thus, it was not a substantive decision, other than concerning agreeing to have this discussion," Ricardo Roura, senior advisor for the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC), a global coalition of environmental non-governmental organisations, told Down To Earth.

Raura said some Parties were keener on regulating tourism than others. "Some are quite supportive of minimal regulation or of adapting regulations to the practices developed by the industry. However, unlike in previous years, there is a general agreement to discuss this issue seriously," he said.

Parties to the Antarctica Treaty unanimously agreed on a list of priority items that will be discussed before the next ATCM meeting to take this proposed tourism regulation framework forward.

The priority areas, according to Roura, are tourism growth and diversification, monitoring, compliance and enforcement, and governance. "So this is the beginning of a long term process," he pointed out.

A document titled "Comprehensive and Consistent Framework for the Regulation of Tourism and Other Non-Governmental Activities in the Antarctic Treaty Area — Suggestions for a Framework Structure", prepared by a host of countries including India, states that consultative Parties have been invited to develop proposals before the convening of that first meeting to ensure due preparation of discussions.

It remains to be seen whether this discussion results in substantial outcomes, while tourism continues to grow and diversify, Roura added.

A 2024 study estimated that visitors to Antarctica, mostly by ship, have risen from about 8,000 a year in 1993-1994 to 105,000 in 2022-2023. This could significantly impact the Antarctic environment, which is sensitive to climate change.

Further, the ASOC noted that countries responded positively to concerns raised on the unregulated disposal of gray water (wastewater without any contributions from toilet water) in the Antarctic Treaty Area. Only sewage (black water) is regulated under an annex of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

Additionally, Parties discussed liability, biological prospecting, exchange of information, education and awareness, a multi-year strategic work plan, safety, inspections, science, future science challenges, scientific cooperation, climate change implications, tourism management, and the like.

No decision was taken on a proposal to designate the emperor penguin as a Specially Protected Species within the Antarctic Treaty System. So far, only one species, the Ross Seal, has been given this status in the continent. In 2022, the United Kingdom proposed to include Emperor Penguin in this category, but one country blocked this.

"ASOC is extremely concerned that the ATCM is unable to agree to use the conservation tools available to it, which have been agreed to by all Parties, to designate the emperor penguin as a Specially Protected Species. Moreover, the proposal was based on a compelling scientific analysis, which almost all Parties explicitly supported. We cannot understand the objections to taking this action," said Claire Christian, ASOC's executive director, said in a statement.

Rising temperatures and changing wind patterns impact the sea ice, which is essential for emperor penguins to breed. Their population could go down by more than 50 per cent by 2100, studies have warned.

—Courtesy Downtoearth

ACTM is an annual meeting that encourages international collaboration on scientific research and sustainable resource management in the icy continent **PHOTO: X/@NCAOR_GOA**

American cricket dream puts the world into World Cup

Cricket is never knowingly lacking a World Cup.

Only 195 days after the men's 50-over World Cup ended, the T20 version gets under way on Sunday. There is a women's T20 World Cup later this year and 50-over event in 2025, not to mention various Champions Trophies, Intertoto Cups and Universal Championships. Some of those may be fictional, but you get the idea.

Whether or not familiarity breeds contempt is a matter of opinion, yet a change can be as good as a rest, and this tournament is certainly different to the grind through India last autumn.

There is a freshness about the 2024 T20 World Cup, both from the hosts and the teams taking part. This is cricket's American Dream, with the sport finally cottoning on to the beauty of a global competition coming from the teams we never see, rather than those we always do.

It is a stretch to think this event will have the same impact on the sporting consciousness of the United States as the football World Cup of 1994 and, in reality, it is a tournament held in the Caribbean plus a portion taking place in the US.

Still, it is also part of a very tangible and undeniable growth of the game in the U-S-of-A. Major League Cricket is already coaxing players away from the English summer and has just been granted official List A status. Cricket will end a 128-year exile from the Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028.

The venues in Texas and Florida are actual cricket grounds, and the glamour comes from a pop-up stadium in New York, completed by a drop-in pitch grown in Adelaide.

Eisenhower Park's 34,000 seats could have been sold out many times over for India vs Pakistan and no doubt will be pretty full for India's other group games against Ireland and the US. However, it is worth remembering the venue is hardly Manhattan, rather 30 miles east of the city centre. How many fans wish to take that journey through rush-hour traffic for Ireland v Canada and a 10.30am start remains to be seen.

One of the many problems with the 50-over World Cup is it is simply a re-run of match-ups we see over and over. Even in T20 cricket, you might feel like you have witnessed England play West Indies or Pakistan umpteen times in recent years.

But 43-year-old Uganda spinner Frank Nsubuga bowling to Kane Williamson? Yes, please. Bring on another Dwayne Leverock moment.

Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York, a key venue for the T20 World Cup 2024 **PHOTO: BBC**

The seemingly endless treadmill of franchise tournaments is a pretty credible stick with which to beat the shortest format of the game, though there is no denying that T20 is spreading the sport across the planet.

Oman, Nepal, Namibia and Scotland will probably never play a Test, yet here they have an opportunity to compete on the grandest stage.

The teams outside of the elite will fancy their chances of landing some blows on the big boys. Ireland, cricketing giants compared to some of the nations competing, beat eventual champions England two years ago in Australia. The Netherlands caused chaos in the 50-over tournament in India and the US have just won a series against Bangladesh. Further up the food chain, Afghanistan will think they can muscle into the last eight.

There is also a purity to the T20 World Cup that sets it aside from domestic competitions, which are often just the same players shuffled into different coloured shirts. There will be no impact subs, no revolving door of overseas players jetting in and out from other leagues, just the best players trying to win a World Cup for their country. The stop-clock between overs should keep the action bumping along, too.

Cricket being cricket, there are some imperfections and idiosyncrasies.

The schedule is chaotic, with matches commencing at all hours and the only pattern to start times is a desire to satisfy Indian TV audiences. If they get through, India already know which semi-final they will play and the final in Barbados on 29 June gets under way at 10.30am local time.

Defending champions England are in the weaker half of the draw, under pressure after a feeble defence of their 50-over world title. A semi-final spot feels a minimum requirement to calm speculation over the futures of captain Jos Buttler and coach Matthew Mott.

The top-order looks exciting and the return of Jofra Archer is a massive boost to the potency of the bowling attack.

There is the subplot of Jonny Bairstow and Phil Salt chasing the wicketkeeping spot in the Test side and the prospect of a last global event for some of the golden generation that made England double world champions.

Australia, looking to become reigning world champions in all three formats, had only nine available players for their warm-up against Namibia. India arrived in dribs and drabs for what could be the last World Cup of some of their megastars.

Those two powerhouses are due to join New Zealand in the Super 8s, meaning at least one of that trio will fail to reach the last four.

The T20 World Cup is historically unpredictable and the best team does not always lift the trophy. The compact grounds of the Caribbean are ideal for T20 cricket and England managing director Rob Key has said the World Cup will be a "slugfest" of six-hitting. England cracked 267-3 against the Windies in Trinidad in December and similar totals should be expected at some point.

Bowlers might want to check their career prospects, spectators should tighten up their insurance policies. In the UK, the T20 World Cup will battle for attention against the general election, Euros and Wimbledon, but it should be great fun.

More importantly, it finally puts the world into a cricket World Cup. *—BBC News*

PHOTO: ARAB NEWS

Sabah al-Khalid is now Kuwait's crown prince

LONDON, 2 JUNE

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Sunday appointed Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah as crown prince, state news agency KUNA reported. Sheikh Meshal instructed the Kuwaiti prime minister to implement the order, KUNA added. The Emiri order was issued Saturday after reviewing the constitution, taking into account Law No. 4 of 1964 regarding the inheritance of the emirate, the Emiri order issued on 15 May, 2024 appointing the prime minister, the Emiri order issued on 10 May, 2024, and Decree No. 73 issued on 12 May, 2024 forming the Cabinet. "We ordered the following: Article (1): Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah shall be approved as Crown Prince," KUNA reported, citing the order. *—Arab News*

Shooting in Ohio birthday party kills 1, injures 27

AKRON, 2 JUNE

At least one person was shot dead and several others were injured as 27 people were shot at a birthday party in Ohio on Sunday. The shooting reportedly happened after midnight near Kelly Avenue and 8th Avenue. Initial reports said a 27-year-old man was killed while dozens of wounded victims were transported to area hospitals. The Akron police and fire departments and a representative for the mayor's office did not immediately respond to an email seeking additional information. *—AP*

Indonesia's Mount Ibu erupts, floods & cold lava flow likely

JAKARTA, 2 JUNE

Indonesia's Mount Ibu erupted again on Sunday and spewed thick, gray ash 7,000 meters into the air, officials said. The volcano, which is located on an island in the eastern North Maluku province, erupted for more than six minutes, according to Muhammad Wafid, chief of Indonesia's Geology Agency. A column of ash could be seen rising high into the sky. It spewed out material including volcanic ash and sand. At the time of the eruption, the wind was blowing to the west, and as a result the volcanic material was carried by the wind down to a site where people previously evacuated have been living, in a field at Gam Ici village, said National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari. A team from the agency is headed to the affected location. Local authorities advised residents not to carry out outdoor activities and remain sheltered indoors as long as the rain of ash mixed with sand continues. *—AP*

California firefighters battle windy wildfire

SAN FRANCISCO, 2 JUNE

California firefighters aided by aircraft battled a wind-driven wildfire burning Saturday in an area straddling the San Francisco Bay Area and central California, authorities said. The Corral Fire began burning Saturday near the city of Tracy, 96 kilometers east of San Francisco, and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in the city of Livermore, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire. Dark plumes of smoke traveled high into the sky over the fire area comprised mostly of grassy hills, where strong winds were expected to continue overnight. Late Saturday, Cal Fire updated the size of the fire to 40.4 square kilometers with 13 per cent contained, which increased from an earlier report of 35.4 square kilometers. *—AP*

Israeli ministers threaten to quit over ceasefire plan

Oppn has pledged to back the govt if PM supported the plan

TEL AVIV, 2 JUNE

Two far-right Israeli ministers have threatened to quit and collapse the governing coalition if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agrees to a Gaza ceasefire proposal unveiled by US President Joe Biden on Friday.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said they were opposed to striking any deal before Hamas was destroyed.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid has pledged to back the government if Netanyahu supported the plan. The Prime Minister himself insisted there would be no permanent truce until Hamas's military and governing capabilities were destroyed and all hostages released.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu PHOTO: PTI

But one of Netanyahu's advisers later described the plan as something "we agreed to" and emphasised Israel is not rejecting it, even if they do not consider it a "good deal". Biden's three-part proposal would begin with a six-week ceasefire in which the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) would withdraw from populated areas of Gaza. The deal would eventually lead to the release of all hostages, a permanent "cessation of hostilities" and a major reconstruction plan for Gaza.

But in a post on social media on Saturday, Smotrich said he told Netanyahu he would "not be part of a government that agrees to the proposed outline and ends the war without destroying Hamas and bringing back all the hostages".

Ben-Gvir said "the deal.. means the end of the war and the abandonment of the goal to destroy Hamas. This is a reckless deal, which constitutes a victory for terrorism and a security threat to the State of Israel". He vowed to "dissolve the government" rather than agree to the proposal. Netanyahu's right-wing coalition holds a slim majority in parliament, relying on a host of factions, including Ben-Gvir's Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power) party - who hold six seats - and Smotrich's Religious Zionism party - who hold seven seats - to maintain power. *—BBC News*

China repeats threat of force against Taiwan

BEIJING, 2 JUNE

Peaceful "reunification" with Taiwan remains China's goal but the prospect is being eroded by Taiwanese "separatists" and external forces, the Chinese defence minister, Dong Jun, has said.

Taiwan – which is democratically governed, and has never been ruled from the Communist-run People's Republic of China – on 20 May inaugurated its newly elected president, Lai Ching-te."

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue conference in Singapore on Sunday, Dong said Taiwan was the "core of core issues" for China. He accused Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive party of incrementally pursuing separatism and working to erase Chinese identity.

Dong accused Taiwan's leaders of "fanatical statements", while employing fevered language of his own in his address to defence officials and politicians from around the world.

"They ['separatists'] will be nailed to the pillar of shame in history," he said.

"The Chinese People's Liberation Army has always been an indestructible and powerful force in defence of the unification of the motherland, and it will act resolutely and forcefully at all times to curb the independence of Taiwan and to ensure that it never succeeds in its attempts.

Taiwan's government said it deeply regretted the "provocative and irrational" remarks by Dong. China has repeatedly threatened Taiwan with force at international events, Taiwan's China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council said in a statement.

—The Guardian

Iranian ex-president, US-sanctioned ex-officer register for Prez election

TEHRAN, 2 JUNE

Iran's firebrand, Holocaust-denying former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad registered Sunday as a possible candidate for the presidential election, according to Associated Press reporters in Tehran, seeking to regain the country's top political position after a helicopter crash killed the nation's president.

The populist former leader's registration puts pressure on Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In office, Ahmadinejad openly challenged the 85-year-old cleric, and his attempt to run in 2021 was barred by authorities.

But Ahmadinejad remains popular among the poor for his populist efforts and home-building programs. Since leaving office, he's raised his profile via social media and written widely publicized letters to world leaders. He's also criticized government corruption, though his own administration faced graft allegations and two of his former vice presidents were jailed.

Khamenei warned Ahmadinejad in 2017 that his standing for office again would be a "polarized situation" that would be "harmful for the county." Khamenei said nothing during Ahmadinejad's 2021 attempt, when his candidacy was rejected by the 12-member Guardian Council, a panel of clerics and jurists ultimately overseen by Khamenei.

US-sanctioned ex-Revolutionary Guards commander Vahid Haghanian was among candidates who registered on Saturday to run for election.

—Times of Israel & AP

Iran's hard-line former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad PHOTO: PTI

SHANGRI-LA CONFERENCE

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged top defence officials to attend the upcoming summit, saying he was disappointed at the failure of some countries to commit to joining PHOTO: PTI

China telling others not to attend peace talks: Zelenskyy

SINGAPORE, 2 JUNE

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused China of helping Russia to disrupt a Swiss-organised peace conference on the war in Ukraine, speaking at Asia's premier security conference on Sunday.

In a news conference at the Shangri-La defense forum in Singapore, Zelenskyy said that China is pressuring other countries and their leaders not to attend the upcoming talks.

"Russia, using Chinese influence in the region, using Chinese diplomats also, does everything to disrupt the peace summit," he said, according to a simultaneous translation of his remarks. "Regrettably this is unfortunate that such a big independent powerful country as China is an instrument in hands of Putin."

In a speech earlier in the day, Zelenskyy urged top defence officials to attend the upcoming summit, saying he was disappointed at the failure of some countries to commit to joining. Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun spoke earlier in the day at the Shangri-La conference but he did not appear to be in the room when Zelenskyy made his appeal.

Zelenskyy said that Ukraine had proposals to make at the summit as a basis for peace, addressing nuclear security, food security, the release of prisoners of war and the return of Ukrainian children abducted by Russia.

At the same time, Zelenskyy said Ukraine is "ready to hear various proposals and thoughts that lead us ... to an end of the war and a sustainable and just peace."

Zelenskyy said he planned to meet one-on-one with Singapore's prime minister and would urge him to participate in person in the Switzerland talks. US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin also attended the conference and sat in the front row as Zelenskyy talked. *—AP*

Ukraine closes power unit after Russian attacks

KYIV, 2 JUNE

Ukraine imposed emergency power shutdowns in most of the country on Sunday, a day after Russia unleashed large-scale attacks on energy infrastructure and claimed it made gains in the eastern Donetsk province.

The shutdowns were in place in all but three regions of Ukraine following Saturday's drone and missile attack on energy targets that injured at least 19 people. Ukraine's state-owned power grid operator Ukrenergo said the shutdowns affected both industrial and household consumers.

Sustained Russian attacks on Ukraine's power grid in recent weeks have forced the government to institute nationwide rolling blackouts. Without adequate air defences to counter assaults and allow for repairs, though, the shortages could still worsen as need spikes in late summer and the bitter-cold winter. Among the most significant recent strikes were an April barrage that damaged Kyiv's largest thermal power plant and a massive attack on May 8 that targeted power generation and transmission facilities in several regions. *—AP*

S Africa's ANC won't consider any demands from coalition partners

CAPE TOWN, 2 JUNE

South Africa's African National Congress party will not consider any demands from possible coalition partners that President Cyril Ramaphosa step down, a top official said Sunday, as the ANC attempted to present a united front after a stinging election result ended its 30-year majority.

As South Africa heads for a series of complex talks to form a national coalition government for the first time and establish stability, ANC secretary-general Fikile Mbalula said Ramaphosa would remain as party leader and any demands from others that he resign for talks to go ahead was "a no-go area."

"President Ramaphosa is the president of the ANC," Mbalula said in the ANC leadership's first public comments since the landmark election results. "And if you come to us with that demand that Ramaphosa is going to step down as the president, that is not going to happen." Mbalula said the ANC was open to talks with every other political party in an effort to form a government, but "no political party will dictate terms to us, the ANC. They will not ... You come to us with that demand, forget (it)."

Mbalula conceded the ANC, which has dominated South African politics since the end of apartheid in 1994, "suffered heavily" in the election but said it was "not booted out."

ANC received just over 40 per cent of votes, falling well short of the majority it has held for all of South Africa's young democracy. It will still be the biggest party by some way. But it needs to talk with others to form a government and to reelect Ramaphosa for a second and final term. South Africa's president is elected by Parliament after national elections. *—AP*

Claudia Sheinbaum

MEXICO TO ELECT 1ST WOMAN PRESIDENT

MEXICO CITY, 2 JUNE

Mexican voters go to the polls on Sunday in an election that seems certain to deliver the country's first female president – and may also give her party enough power in congress to change the constitution and rewire the democracy of Latin America's second-largest economy. Frontrunner Claudia Sheinbaum, a 61-year-old climate scientist and former mayor of Mexico City, has vowed to continue the policies of her populist predecessor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who founded the Morena party and forged a bond with voters who had become disenchanted with democracy.

—The Guardian

HISTORY CREATED

China's Chang'e-6 lands on Moon's far side

BEIJING, 2 JUNE

A Chinese spacecraft successfully touched down on the far side of the Moon on Sunday, in the first endeavour of its kind to collect samples from this rarely explored terrain.

The Chang'e-6 landed at the designated landing area at 6:23 am (Beijing Time) in the South Pole-Aitken (SPA) Basin for the first time in human history, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) announced.

Chang'e-6 consists of an orbiter, a returner, a lander and an ascender.

Since its launch on 3 May this year, it has gone through various stages such as Earth-Moon transfer, near-Moon braking, lunar orbiting and landing descent. The lander-ascender combination separated from the orbiter-returner combination on 30 May, the CNSA said.

The Chang'e-6 landed at the designated landing area at 6:23 am in the South Pole-Aitken Basin for the first time in history PHOTO: CNSA

For the powered descent, regarded as the most complex manoeuvre, an autonomous visual obstacle avoidance system was used to automatically detect obstacles. A visible light camera selected a comparatively safe landing area based on the brightness and darkness of the lunar surface, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The Chang'e-6 mission is tasked with collecting and returning samples from the Moon's far side, the first endeavour of its kind.

The choice was made for the Apollo Basin's potential value of scientific exploration, as well as the conditions of the landing area, including communication and telemetry conditions and the flatness of the terrain, Huang Hao, a space expert from the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation said. The terrain on the far side of the Moon is more rugged than the near side, with fewer continuous flat areas Huang told Xinhua. *—AP*

N Korea sends more trash balloons to S Korea

SEOUL, 2 JUNE

North Korea launched hundreds of more trash-carrying balloons toward the South after a similar campaign a few days earlier, according to South Korea's military, in what Pyongyang calls retaliation for activists flying anti-North Korean leaflets across the border.

Between Saturday night and Sunday morning, about 600 balloons flown from North Korea have been found in various parts of South Korea. The balloons carried cigarette butts, scraps of cloth, waste paper and vinyl, but no dangerous substances were included, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said Sunday.

The military advised people to beware of falling objects and not to touch objects suspected to be from North Korea but report them to military or police offices instead. There have been no reports of injuries or damage.

In Seoul, the city government sent text alerts saying that unidentified objects suspected to be flown from North Korea were detected in skies near the city and that the military was responding to them.

The North's balloon launches added to a recent series of provocative steps, which include its failed spy satellite launch. *—AP*

Infosys fined USD 3,142 by Texas Comptroller

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

IT major Infosys has been fined an amount of USD 3,142.02 (around Rs 2.60 lakh) by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, USA. The penalty was imposed due to non-payment of sales tax for the period of April 2024, according to a regulatory filing. *—PTI*

Ashok Leyland sales rise by 12 pc in May

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

Commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland on Sunday reported a 12 per cent increase in total wholesales at 14,682 units in May. In the year-ago period, the company posted total wholesales of 13,134 units. Domestic sales increased 12 per cent to 13,852 units last month as compared to 12,378 units in May 2023, Ashok Leyland said in a statement. Sales of medium and heavy commercial vehicles in domestic market were 13 per cent higher. *—PTI*

Income tax dept imposes penalty of Rs 4.68 cr on L&T

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

The income tax department has imposed a penalty of over Rs 4.68 crore on Larsen & Toubro Ltd, according to a regulatory filing. The department levied a penalty of Rs 4,68,91,352 in connection to the tax proceedings of erstwhile L&T Hydrocarbon Engineering Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary, which was merged with the company on 1 April, 2021, L&T said in the filing on Saturday. "Pursuant to the income tax assessment of the company and consequent adjustment in the returned income for the Assessment Year 2020-21, a penalty is levied on such adjustment to the returned income," it said. However, the conglomerate said it will file an appeal against this order as it "does not agree with this levy" and expects a favourable outcome at the higher forum. L&T is a USD 27 billion Indian multinational enterprise engaged in engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) projects, hi-tech manufacturing and services, operating across multiple geographies. *—PTI*

Mcap of 8 of 10 most valued firms erodes by ₹2.8L cr

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms declined by Rs 2,08,207.93 crore last week, with bellwether Reliance Industries, TCS and Infosys taking the biggest hit. While these three firms along with ITC, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Bharti Airtel and ICICI Bank were the laggards, HDFC Bank and State Bank of India (SBI) emerged as gainers. Last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,449 points or 1.92 per cent. It rose by 75.71 points or 0.10 per cent to settle at 73,961.31 on Friday, snapping a five-day losing streak. The market capitalisation (mcap) of index heavyweight Reliance Industries plunged by Rs 67,792.23 crore to Rs 19,34,717.12 crore, while TCS mcap declined by Rs 65,577.84 crore to Rs 13,27,657.21 crore. The valuation of Infosys slumped by Rs 24,338.1 crore to Rs 5,83,860.28 crore, and that of ITC went lower by Rs 12,422.29 crore to Rs 5,32,036.41 crore. Mcap of LIC dropped by Rs 10,815.74 crore to Rs 6,40,532.52 crore, while HUL's valuation eroded by Rs 9,680.31 crore to Rs 5,47,149.32 crore. Bharti Airtel's mcap fell by Rs 9,503.31 crore to Rs 7,78,335.40 crore, and that of ICICI Bank dipped by Rs 8,078.11 crore to Rs 7,87,229.71 crore. However, mcap of HDFC Bank climbed Rs 10,954.49 crore to Rs 11,64,083.85 crore. SBI added Rs 1,338.7 crore, taking the market valuation to Rs 7,40,832.04 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm from the top-10 pack, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, SBI, LIC, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, and ITC. *—PTI*

Adani reclaims Asia's richest person title

Adani overtakes Ambani's net worth of $109B

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani ***PHOTO: X / @GAUTAM_ADANI***

Gautam Adani has retaken the tag of richest person in Asia after a surge in stock price of the listed companies in his apples-to-airport conglomerate helped him overtake Reliance Industries head Mukesh Ambani.

Adani with a net worth of USD 111 billion is now ranked as the 11th richest in the world, ahead of Ambani whose USD 109 billion wealth placed him at No. 12, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Shares of all Adani Group companies surged on Friday by up to 14 per cent after US brokerage Jefferies put a bullish view on the group that is back to an expansion spree with a planned USD 90 billion capital expenditure over the next decade.

An addition of Rs 84,064 crore in market value took the market capitalisation of 10 Adani group listed firms to Rs 17.51 lakh crore at the close of trading on Friday. This helped Adani, a first generation entrepreneur and chairman of the namesake conglomerate, overtake Ambani, who is currently on a cruise in Europe for a second, multi-million-dollar pre-wedding celebration of his youngest son Anant.

Adani, 61, had in 2022 become Asia's richest man after his personal wealth rose even as the global economy suffered a period of slowing growth. But in January 2023, his sprawling USD 21 billion conglomerate that owns many of India's airports, the nation's largest private-sector port, the media giant New Delhi Television, largest renewable energy firm, data centres and many other holdings was hit by a damning report by prominent short-seller Hindenburg Research.

And now, Adani has overtaken Ambani after nearly 5 months. In January, Adani had overtaken Ambani after nearly 12 months but soon after conceded the top spot to Ambani. Now Adani has overtaken Ambani again.

So far in 2024, Adani's net worth has jumped USD 26.8 billion while Ambani's wealth has increased by USD 12.7 billion, according to Bloomberg Billionaires Index. A college dropout, Adani began his career in diamond industry before joining a plastics factory run by his brother. *—PTI*

ADANI PORTFOLIO RECORDS 45% EBITDA GROWTH

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

Adani Group companies posted a record 45 per cent rise in pre-tax profit (EBITDA) to Rs 82,917 crore (about USD 10 billion) in FY24 as the apples-to-airport conglomerate made a massive comeback, the group said on Sunday.

Emerging from a damning report of a US short seller, which hit the market value of its listed companies, Adani Group in 2023-24 focused on containing debt, reducing founder share pledge and consolidating the business in core competencies. The five-year CAGR (compound annual growth rate) for profit growth was 54 per cent.

As much as 84 per cent of EBITDA is from 'core infrastructure' businesses, providing highly predictable cash flows.

Cash profit or funds flow from operations (FFO) was at Rs 56,828 crore, registering a growth of 51 per cent year-on-year through a disciplined investment strategy providing high conversion, Adani Group said in a statement.

Strong Asset Base built over three decades supporting resilient critical infrastructure stands at Rs 4,78,137 crore (USD 57 billion) - this asset base serves a consumer base of 350 million users. *—PTI*

POLL JITTERS

FPIs take out Rs 25,586 cr from equities in May

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Foreign investors pulled out a massive Rs 25,586 crore from Indian equities in May due to uncertainty surrounding the outcome of general election and outperformance of Chinese markets.

This was way higher than a net outflow of over Rs 8,700 crore in April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields.

Before that, FPIs made a net investment of Rs 35,098 crore in March and Rs 1,539 crore in February, while they took out Rs 25,743 crore in January, data with the depositories showed. Going ahead, election results, which will be out on June 4, could determine FPIs flows into Indian equities in the near future.

In the medium term, US interest rates will exert more influence on FPI flows, Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

According to the data, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) made a net withdrawal of Rs 25,586 crore from equities in May.

On the other hand, FPIs invested Rs 8,761 crore in debt and Rs 4,283 crore through debt-VRR (Voluntary Retention Route). Before this, foreign investors put in Rs w13,602 crore in March, Rs 22,419 crore in February, Rs 19,836 crore in January.

This inflow was driven by the upcoming inclusion of Indian government bonds in the JP Morgan Index.

Market experts believe that long-term outlook for FPI flows into Indian debt is positive due to India's inclusion in global bond indices. *—PTI*

RBI unlikely to cut interest rate on 7 June, say experts

MUMBAI, 2 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is unlikely to cut the benchmark interest rate at its upcoming monetary policy review meeting, taking place soon after the announcement of the Lok Sabha election results, amid inflation challenges, said experts.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may also refrain from rate cut as economic growth is picking up, notwithstanding the elevated interest rate of 6.5 per cent (repo) prevailing since February 2023.

The meeting of the Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed MPC is scheduled for 5 – 7 June. The decision will be announced on 7 June. The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023 and since then it has held the rate at same level in its previous six bi-monthly policies.

The government has mandated the Reserve Bank to ensure the consumer price index (CPI) based inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

The retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 4.83 per cent in April this year.

In an off-cycle meeting in May 2022, the MPC raised the policy rate by 40 basis points and it was followed by rate hikes of varying sizes, in each of the five subsequent meetings till February 2023. *—PTI*

'ATTRACTED MAXIMUM INFLOWS'

India receives highest FDI from Singapore in 2023-24: Govt data

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

India's investments increased after many tax treaties signed ***PHOTO: PTI***

India received the highest foreign direct investment (FDI) from Singapore in 2023-24 even as overseas capital inflows into the country contracted by about 3.5 per cent due to global economic uncertainties, according to the latest government data.

Though FDI from Singapore has dipped by 31.55 per cent to USD 11.77 billion in 2023-24, India has attracted the maximum inflows from that country, the data showed.

During the last fiscal, FDI equity inflows decreased from major countries, including Mauritius, Singapore, the US, the UK, UAE, Cayman Islands, Germany, and Cyprus.

However, investments increased from Netherlands and Japan.

According to experts, after the India-Mauritius tax treaty amendment, Singapore has emerged as the preferred jurisdiction for investment in India. FDI equity inflows in India declined 3.49 per cent to USD 44.42 billion in 2023-24 as against USD 46.03 billion in 2022-23.

Sectorally, inflows contracted in services, computer software and hardware, trading, telecommunication, automobile, pharma and chemicals.

In contrast, construction (infrastructure) activities, development and power sectors registered a healthy growth in inflows during the period under review. *—PTI*

INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES DECLINE USD 2 BILLION

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

India's foreign exchange reserves declined a little over USD 2 billion in the week that ended on May 24, to come off from its all-time high it experienced a week prior. The reserves are now at USD 646.673 billion.

In the previous week, the reserves rose for the third straight week, by USD 4.549 billion to USD 648.700 billion, according to data shared by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). In the process, they touched a fresh lifetime high.

Preceding those three weeks, the forex kitty had seen three consecutive weeks of decline.

According to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the biggest component of the forex reserves, declined by USD 1.510 billion to USD 567.499 billion.

Gold reserves during the week declined by USD 482 million to USD 56.713 billion.

India's foreign exchange reserves are now sufficient to cover around 11 months of projected imports, according to a RBI report.

Typically, the RBI, from time to time, intervenes in the market through liquidity management, including through the sale of dollars, to prevent a steep depreciation in the rupee.

The RBI closely monitors the foreign exchange markets and intervenes only to maintain orderly market conditions by containing excessive volatility in the exchange rate, without reference to any pre-determined target level or band. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Sweltering heat triggers 15 pc rise in power consumption

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

Highest supply in a day rose to an all- time high of 250.07 GW ***PHOTO: PTI***

India's power consumption rose nearly 15 per cent to 156.31 billion units (BU) in May as compared to the year-ago period, mainly due to scorching heat in the country which forced excessive use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and desert coolers.

In May 2023, the power consumption stood at 136.50 BU, government data showed.

The highest supply in a day (peak power demand met) also rose to an all- time high of 250.07 GW in May 2024 against 221.42 GW in the year-ago month. The previous all-time high peak power demand of 243.27 GW was recorded in September 2023.

Last month, the power ministry had projected a peak power demand of 235 GW during daytime and 225 GW during evening hours for May and 240 GW during daytime and 235 GW during evening hours for June 2024.

The ministry also estimated that peak power demand may hit 260 GW during this summer.

The demand for power as well as consumption will continue to be steady during this summer, they said. The data showed that the peak supply was 245.41 GW on Saturday, 1 June.

The peak power demand was recorded at 224.10 GW in entire June 2023. Experts said the level of peak supply on first day of this month clearly indicates that power consumption as well as demand would be robust in June as well. *—PTI*

AC makers clock two-fold jump in sales amid heatwave

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

A blistering summer has led to an almost two-fold jump in sales of air-conditioners in May even as leading manufacturers have been grappling with delays in installation and replenishing inventories of hot-selling energy-efficient models. The mercury is hovering above 45 degrees at several places including the national capital, which has been under the grip of a severe heatwave for the past few days. At the same time, AC makers are navigating exceptional demand, recording their best-ever sales in a month so far. Leading brands like Voltas, LG, Daikin, Panasonic, and Blue Star witnessed robust sales in May and the industry expects an overall growth of 30 to 35 per cent in 2024 compared to their sales of last year. *—PTI*

CONTROLS TRAFFIC

Airlines ride AI: Lesser workload, human-like responses for flyers

NEW DELHI, 2 JUNE

AI is providing the technological tailwinds for airlines ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

From human-like responses to reduced workload for customer service agents to utilisation of trillions of parameters for answering air passengers' queries, artificial intelligence is providing the technological tailwinds for Indian airlines as they cater to rising traffic.

For Air India, which has embarked on a five-year transformation plan, Artificial Intelligence (AI) use will be "pervasive" and its generative AI virtual agent AI.g handles over 1,300 topics.

And the country's largest airline IndiGo has AI chatbot 6Eskai that has 1.7 trillion parameters, allowing it to answer questions with ease. Also, the bot can understand written, typed language, and verbal instructions using speech-to-text models.

Akasa Air, which describes itself as a "cloud-native and digital-native brand", said it will continue to invest heavily in proven technology solutions across all business functions.

India, one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets, is seeing rising domestic air traffic, and airlines are also expanding their fleet, including with wide-body aircraft.

Across industries, including aviation, the adoption of new-age technologies like AI and Machine Learning (ML) is on the rise.

Besides, another feature is being planned to offer passengers more options in the event of operational issues.

"The AI chatbot efficiently addresses customer queries in 10 different languages and offers a first-of-a-kind platform for booking tickets across the entire network. The implementation of 6Eskai has led to a remarkable 75 per cent decrease in the workload for customer service agents," the IndiGo spokesperson said.

- The country's largest airline IndiGo has AI chatbot 6Eskai that has 1.7 trillion parameters, allowing it to answer questions with ease. Also, the bot can understand written, typed language, and verbal instructions using speech-to-text models

Currently, 6Eskai -- which boasts an impressive 1.7 trillion parameters, allowing it to answer a diverse range of commonly asked questions -- is transferring only 2-9 per cent of chats to experts.

Akasa Air, which has been flying for less than two years now, said it will continue to invest in appropriate technologies such as optimisation and AI to help gain insights into its customer behaviour and operational parameters.

"We leverage these insights to make informed and data-backed decisions to serve our customers better. Additionally, we have also deployed AI-based cyber threat prevention capabilities that leverage the power of AI to identify and thwart cyber threats in real time," Akasa Air Co-Founder and Chief Information Officer Anand Srinivasan told PTI.

He also noted that all operational and commercial decisions are backed by technologies that leverage data, mathematical models and, where appropriate, AI and Internet of Things (IoT) .

"These include the pricing of our flights, choice of routes, deployment of aircraft, rostering of operating and ground crew, scheduling engine maintenance etc". *—PTI*

Real Madrid players pose for a group photograph after winning the match against Dortmund on Sunday; Luka Modric & Toni Kroos after winning the match; Vinicius Jr and Dani Carvajal celebrate after scoring goals

PHOTO: X/@REALMADRID

Real Madrid win record 15th Champions League

Dani Carvajal and Vinicius Jr scored as Real Madrid beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 to win at Wembley

LONDON, 2 JUNE

In an explosion of gold and silver confetti, Real Madrid held aloft the Champions League trophy for a record-extending 15th time on Saturday.

The most familiar sight in European club soccer's greatest competition felt as fresh as ever after a 2-0 win against Borussia Dortmund in the final at Wembley Stadium.

"Getting used to it? Never," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, who extended his own record of wins as a coach to five. "The dream continues." A white wall of Madrid fans at one end of the stadium serenaded their conquering heroes after goals from Dani Carvajal and Vinicius Junior sealed the victory.

A predictable result came in less than predictable circumstances after Dortmund dominated the chances in the first half.

Carvajal headed Madrid in front in the 74th minute and Vinicius doubled the Spanish giant's lead nine minutes later. Ancelotti's fifth Champions League title was his third in two spells with Madrid. Carvajal, Luka Modric, Toni Kroos and Nacho won the trophy a sixth time to equal the benchmark set by Madrid icon Paco Gento.

Madrid's win comes just a year after Manchester City lifted the trophy for the first time, a victory many believed would herald a new era of dominance for Guardiola's team in Europe. Instead, it was Ancelotti who underlined his case to be considered the finest coach of his generation for his continued supremacy in the Champions League.

As well as three titles with Madrid, he was a two-time winner with AC Milan. He also lifted the Spanish title this season - his sixth league championship won in five different countries.

Dortmund paid the price for not making the most of its first half superiority when Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois pulled off a series of saves and Niclas Fullkrug hit the post. Madrid took full advantage after the break when Carvajal met Kroos' corner at the near post to power a header past Dortmund keeper Gregor Kobel. Vinicius fired past Kobel to make it 2-0 and raced off in celebration after his goal killed off Dortmund hopes of pulling off one of the biggest Champions League upsets in recent memory. Later, Vinicius celebrated and posed for selfies with rapper Jay-Z, who was in the crowd of 86,000. It was the second time Dortmund has lost in the final, having been beaten by Bayern Munich in 2013 when the showpiece occasion was also staged at Wembley.

Its only win in the competition was in 1997, but for a long time, the German side looked capable of halting Madrid after dominating the chances in first half. —*AP*

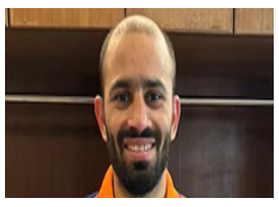


PHOTO: PTI

Panghal, Jaismine qualify for Paris Olympics

BANGKOK, 2 JUNE

World championships silver medallist boxer Amit Panghal and national champion Jaismine Lamboria qualified for the Paris Olympics with contrasting quarterfinal wins at the 2nd World Qualification Tournament here on Sunday. Panghal's comeback to the Indian team culminated in the fifth Olympic quota in boxing as the multiple-time Asian Championships medallist notched a hard-fought 5-0 win over China's Chuang Liu for a ticket to his second Games.Jaismine, who dropped down from 60kg, then reclaimed the women's 57kg quota for the country, which India had to surrender after holder Parveen Hooda was suspended for whereabout failure last month.—*PTI*

Pant, Pandya lead India's 60-run win over Bangladesh

NEW YORK, 2 JUNE

India ticked multiple boxes during their 60-run victory over Bangladesh in the T20 World Cup warm-up match here on Saturday, but none bolder than a fifty by Rishabh Pant which has all but sealed his place as the first-choice wicketkeeper batter in the ICC showpiece. Pant's 53 (32b, 4x4, 4x6), who was making his India comeback after that horrific car accident in December 2022, and Hardik Pandya's equally pleasing (40 not out, 23b, 2x4, 4x6) led India to a competitive 182 for five after opting to bat first. India faced little trouble in defending the total as left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh found his bowling wares, leading the restriction of Bangladesh to 122 for nine. —*PTI*

Stay calm, keep nerves at bay: Babar Azam

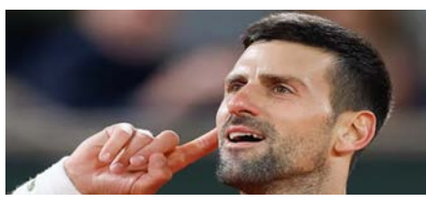
NEW YORK, 3 JUNE

The hype, the expectations and the pressure around the India-Pakistan games certainly make players nervous, says Babar Azam who advised his side to stay calm and stick to basics during the much-awaited T20 World Cup clash, here Sunday. India has lost only once to Pakistan in the T20 World Cup in seven meetings with their only defeat coming in 2021 when the Virat Kohli-led side lost by 10 wickets at the Super 12 stage. There is a different vibe altogether for this fixture.—*PTI*

Novak Djokovic beats Musetti in five sets

Swiatek sails into QF with a commanding win

PARIS, 2 JUNE



Djokovic and Iga Swiatek

PHOTO: X/@ROLANDGARROS

Djokovic wrapped up the final set 6-0, having struggled in the middle part of the match when Musetti was playing his best tennis. Speaking afterwards, the 24-time Grand Slam champion, and defending champion at Roland Garros, told the crowd that at 2-2 in the fourth set, they had given him the energy he needed to be a "different player" and carried him to victory. The final result was 7-5, 6-7, 2-6, 6-3, 6-0.

The previous latest finish in tournament history was 1:26 a.m. when Rafael Nadal beat Jannik Sinner in 2020 on his way to winning the title.

Bulgarian 10th seed Dimitrov was leading by two sets to love when they restarted, but Belgian qualifier Bergs took the third set, extending the match and forcing Djokovic and Musetti, the 30th seed, to wait.

World no. 1 **Iga Swiatek** cruised to the quarter-finals of the French Open after a commanding 6-0, 6-0 win over Russia's Anastasia Potapova on Sunday.

In the 40-minute-long encounter, the Polish did not lose a single game in straight sets win in the fourth round at Court Philippe-Chatrier.

It was Swiatek's shortest tour-level match of her career and she was not taken to deuce once.

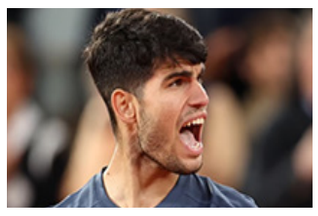
Previously, her shortest matches came against Simona Halep (45 minutes, Roland Garros 2019) and Karolina Pliskova (46 minutes, Rome 2021), according to WTA stats.

Rohan Bopanna-Matthew Ebden pair moves to French Open second round

Second seeds Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden overcame fighting Brazilians Orlando Luz and Marcelo Zormann in a testing three-set opening round at the French Open in Paris on Sunday.

The Brazilians made life tough for the Australian Open champions who scraped through 7-5 4-6 6-4 in two hours and seven minutes.

Entering as an eighth alternate pair, Zormann and Luz would not have hoped to feature in the tournament but a spate of withdrawals cleared their way. —*AP*



Carlos Alcaraz

PHOTO: PTI

CARLOS ALCARAZ BREEZES PAST FELIX AUGER

PARIS, 2 JUNE

Carlos Alcaraz strolled past 21st seed Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 on Sunday to make the quarter-finals of the French Open for the third year in succession. The 21-year-old Spaniard pumped 34 winners past an ailing Auger-Aliassime.

The Canadian took a medical timeout while 3-2 behind in the second set for an apparent leg injury and won just two more games as Alcaraz delivered his best performance of the tournament. Tsitsipas returned from a set down to defeat Matteo Arnaldi and reach the quarter-finals for the fourth tim e on Sunday.Greek ninth seed Tsitsipas, runner-up to Novak Djokovic at Roland Garros in 2021, won 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2, 6-2.His reward is a clash with Carlos Alcaraz for a place in the semi-finals. —*AP*

NORWAY CHESS

Pragg stuns Fabiano Caruana, enters top 10 world ranking

STAVANGER, 2 JUNE

R Praggnanandhaa

PHOTO: PTI

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa scored a massive, hard-earned victory over world number two Fabiano Caruana of the United States and made his way to the top 10 of world rankings after the end of the fifth round of Norway Chess tournament here.

Hikaru Nakamura of the United States got the better of off-color world champion Ding Liren of China to stretch his lead to a full point over Magnus Carlsen of Norway.

With 10 points in his bag, Nakamura has a full-point lead over Carlsen at the halfway stage of this USD 161000 prize money tournament.

Carlsen outwitted Firouzja Alireza of France from a drawn rook and pawns endgame. With five rounds still to come, the world number one is followed by Praggnanandhaa on 8.5 points while a distant fourth now is Alireza who remained on 6.5 following his loss.

Caruana on five is in the fifth spot while Ding Liren is not enjoying the event with just 2.5 points to his credit.

In the women's event being held simultaneously, R Vaishali continued her dream run and defeated Tingkie Lei of China in the Armageddon game to keep her lead of 10 points.

Anna Muzychuk is the closest to the Indian and is a full point behind after defeating Pia Cramling of Sweden in the Classical game.

Women's world champion Wenjun Ju is third on 7.5 after scoring her fifth straight victory in the Armageddon over Koneru Humpy.

—*PTI*

Aditi tied 29th after tough 3rd round at US Women's Open

LANCASTER, 2 JUNE

Aditi Ashok

PHOTO: PTI

Aditi Ashok endured another roller-coaster round, carding a below-par 3-over 73 to go tied 29th on the third day of the US Women's Open.

Aditi's rounds included two birdies, three bogeys, and a double bogey.

The double bogey came on the fourth, where she had lost two shots on the first day too.

Aditi's first two rounds have been 73-71 and she is currently at 7-over in her 29th Major.

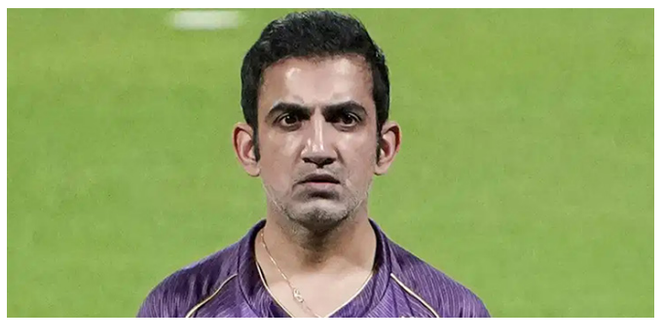
Aditi, who came close to a medal at the Tokyo Olympics, is still looking for her first top-20 finish in a Major.

On a course that has been difficult to score, only five players are under and there are three co-leaders.

—*PTI*

Would love to coach India: Gambhir

DUBAI, 2 JUNE



Former India batter Gautam Gambhir

PHOTO: ANI

Former India batter Gautam Gambhir has said he would "love to coach" the national team amid speculation that he is the front-runner for the high-profile job.

Gambhir recently guided Kolkata Knight Riders to their third IPL title and is seen as an able successor to Rahul Dravid, whose contract expires after the ongoing T20 World Cup.

The deadline to apply for the head coach's role was May 27 but it is still not clear if Gambhir has submitted his application."I would love to coach the Indian team. There is no bigger honor than coaching your national team. You are representing 140 crore Indians and those across the globe as well," said the 42-year-old at an event in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

Earlier this week, former India captain Sourav Ganguly had backed Gambhir for the India head coach role, saying "he is a good candidate". Gambhir was addressing a gathering of students at Medeor Hospital in Abu Dhabi.

—*PTI*

Aaron Jones, USA

PHOTO: PTI

T20 WC: USA THUMP CANADA BY SEVEN WICKETS

DALLAS, 2 JUNE

USA announced their arrival in top-flight cricket in spectacular fashion as **Aaron Jones** introduced himself with a 40-ball 94 in a seven-wicket hammering of Canada in the opening match of the T20 World Cup here.

Batting first, Canada posted 194 for five, but USA turned what could have been a tricky chase into a cruise, completing the task with as many as 14 balls to spare.

America's very own Jones, who was born in Queens, a New York City borough, smashed 10 sixes and four boundaries to make a statement on behalf of the team full of expatriates.

While Jones was without an iota of doubt the star batter of the match, Andries Gous too made an impression with his 65 off 46 balls.

Gous hit seven fours and three sixes during his stay in the middle after the USA lost two wickets with just 42 runs on the board.

USA 197 for 3 (Jones 94*, Gous 65, Heyliger 1-19) beat Canada 194 for 5 (Dhaliwal 61, Kirton 51, Harmeet 1-27) by seven wickets.

—*PTI*

FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

Careers of boys can change with 6 June game: Stimac

KOLKATA, 2 JUNE

Indian national football team captain Sunil Chhetri with coach Igor Stimac during a practice session

PHOTO: PTI

- Indian football team coach Igor Stimac on Sunday said the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Kuwait could "change the careers" of his players and described it as a "huge game".

Indian football team coach Igor Stimac on Sunday said the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Kuwait could "change the careers" of his players and described it as a "huge game".

"It's a huge game. The careers of the boys can change with this game. I want them to enjoy and do their best in the game," Stimac told the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

India, who slipped to 121 in the FIFA rankings after gaining just a solitary point in their two meetings with Afghanistan in March, will look to put up a much better display against Kuwait in what will also be talisman Sunil Chhetri's farewell from international football.

"For such an important game, we need to do a few things; in regards to strength conditioning, in regards to understanding what it needs, in regards to how important this game is, and in regards to mental strength and self-confidence.

"So, we work on all aspects needed for our boys to be on top of their form in this game."

The head coach added: "There are two key points for the preparations for this game. First, winning the game is crucial. And to reach that target, we need to be very clever. We need to understand that in the game, we require patience. —*PTI*